CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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WAR? WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN: US

War enters **Day 5** in 'smoke and blood' as markets slide; US-Israel trade strikes with Iran as IRGC warns of **'complete destruction'** of regional infrastructure; Trump pledges **safe Mideast oil transit**; but Kpler says oil tanker traffic through Strait of Hormuz down **90%**

What's happening?

- Heavy explosions continue to rock Tehran. As per Iranian state media reports, strikes in the port city of Minab have resulted in over 165 casualties.
- US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, during a press briefing at the Pentagon on Wednesday, said the "leader behind effort to assassinate President Donald Trump has been killed."
- The western military alliance NATO has condemned Iran's targeting of Turkey after reports emerged that a ballistic missile was destroyed by the NATO air defences in eastern Mediterranean on Wednesday.
- US President Donald Trump has defended the offensive as a "last chance" to ensure regional stability and prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. CENTCOM has confirmed the first American casualties during ongoing ground and air operations.
- Following the death of Iranian supreme leader Khamenei, President Masoud Pezeshkian has activated Article 111 of the Iranian Constitution, establishing a provisional Leadership Council to manage the transition.
- Oil transit through the Strait of Hormuz is at "extreme risk" as the waterway may be closed to all commercial shipping.
- In a significant blow to energy markets, Qatar has halted LNG production, and drone strikes have been reported on fuel infrastructure at Oman's Duqm Port.

DUBAI

The Middle East conflict has reached a critical flashpoint on its fifth day of large-scale combat operations.

After the confirmed death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in a targeted strike on February 28, joint US-Israeli forces have intensified 'Operation Epic Fury'.

Over 1,250 targets across Iran, including ballistic missile hubs, naval assets, and intelligence headquarters, have been struck as part of a campaign to dismantle Tehran's nuclear and military infrastructure.

The fighting has showed no signs of abating five days after it erupted, with Israel and Iran continuing to exchange airstrikes and missile fire. Hundreds of people have died in Iran and dozens elsewhere in the region, while the US says six of its servicemen have been killed.

"We have no trust in the Americans and no intention of negotiating with the US," Mohammad Mokhber, an adviser to the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who was slain in the first salvo of strikes, told Iran's state-run television.

In all, about a dozen nations have become embroiled in the conflict, with Tehran striking U.S. bases and embassies across the Middle East, and Israel launching an air and ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon after it came under attack from the Iran-aligned group. China, India, Japan and South Africa are among a host of nations to express concern about the mounting impact of the conflict.

As Tehran vows a "scorched earth" retaliation, the global economy remains in a state of high alert. While international gold prices saw a slight correction on Wednesday from record highs, they remain elevated near $5,100 per ounce, reflecting deep market anxiety over the potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranian air force is no more. The combined US and Israeli operations now control Iran's airspace and key maritime approaches without deploying ground troops

—Pete Hegseth, US Defence Secretary

WASHINGTON

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday said America was winning in the war against Iran and that the US military could fight as long as needed with the use of unlimited stock pile of precision gravity bombs.

Speaking at a Pentagon media briefing on the progress of 'Operation Epic Fury', he said American and Israeli forces have taken control of Iran's airspace and waterways as military operations against Tehran enter their fifth day, claiming the Iranian air force has effectively been neutralised. The campaign was still in its early phase.

"Four days in, we have only just begun to fight," he said, adding that US and allied operations had significantly degraded Iran's military capabilities.

He claimed that Iranian air defences and aviation assets have been severely damaged.

"The Iranian air force is no more," he said, claiming that combined US and Israeli operations now control Iran's airspace and key maritime approaches without deploying ground troops. "Thousands of Iranian missiles and drones have been intercepted and vaporised," Hegseth added.

He further claimed that a commander of an Iranian unit allegedly involved in an earlier attempt to assassinate US President Donald Trump had been located and killed during the ongoing operations. "Iran tried to kill Trump, but Trump got the last laugh," he said.

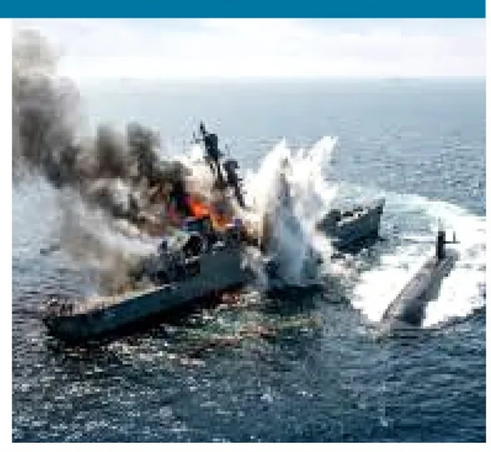
He asserted, 'US will have complete control of Iran skies in a week,' adding that more forces are arriving to launch strikes on Tehran.\

US submarine torpedoed Iranian warship

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Wednesday that the Iranian warship IRIS Dena which sunk off the Sri Lankan coast was attacked by a US submarine in the Indian Ocean. Hegseth called the attack "quiet death" and the first US sinking of an enemy ship by torpedo since World War II. "An American submarine sunk an Iranian warship that thought it was safe in international waters. Instead, it was sunk by a torpedo," Hegseth said. The US military said it destroyed 17 Iranian ships, including a submarine, and struck nearly 2,000 targets in Iran, a top US commander said earlier on Wednesday.

US sub sinks Iranian warship in Indian Ocean, 88 killed

Earlier, the US military stated that it destroyed 17 Iranian ships, including a submarine, and struck nearly 2,000 targets in Iran.



COLOMBO

The war in West Asian has seemingly reached the Indian Ocean as an Iranian Navy frigate that had taken part in the Indian Navy's International Fleet Review (IFR) and the multinational Exercise 'Milan' in Visakhapatnam in mid-February was hit by a torpedo fired by a US Navy nuclear-powered attack submarine in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) early Wednesday.

At least 88 were people killed in a US submarine strike on an Iranian warship in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka's Deputy Foreign Minister told local television.

Sri Lankan navy source said the vessel, IRIS Dena, issued a distress call south of Sri Lanka around dawn, soon after the strike, triggering a search. "What we know at this point is that 79 people were rescued and brought to the hospital and one of them had died. Another 101 are believed to be missing and the vessel has sunk."

Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath informed Parliament that Sri Lanka's navy received information that the Moudge-class frigate IRIS Dena, with 180 onboard, was under distress in international waters about 40 nautical miles south of Sri Lanka, and that the island nation sent ships and air force planes on a rescue mission.

It is also learnt the vessel was scheduled to halt at Kochi for refuelling before beginning its onward passage westward towards the Persian Gulf.

Earlier, the US military stated that it destroyed 17 Iranian ships, including a submarine, and struck nearly 2,000 targets in Iran. "Today, there is not a single Iranian ship underway in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, or Gulf of Oman," US Central Command's Brad Cooper stated in an X post.

'Iran intel signaled openness to talks with CIA to end war'

TEHRAN

Operatives from Iran's Ministry of Intelligence signalled openness to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to talks on ending the war, the New York Times reported on Wednesday, citing officials briefed on the matter. The offer was made through an unnamed country's spy agency, the NYT said, citing Middle Eastern officials and officials from a Western nation who spoke on condition of anonymity. The White House and the CIA did not immediately respond to it.

'Will target Israeli embassies worldwide if...'

Iran will target Israeli embassies worldwide if Israel attacks the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon, said Iranian armed forces spokesman Abolfazl Shekarchi. "Until now, we have not cared about the embassies of Zionist regime, but if they targets our Lebanon embassy, then all its embassies will become targets for us."

Russia signals backup oil supply to India amid 'war shock'

MOSCOW

Russia is reportedly preparing to ship around 9.5 million barrels of crude oil to India in a move aimed at cushioning the country against mounting supply disruptions triggered by escalating tensions in West Asia.

The offer comes at a time when energy markets are rattled by fears of prolonged conflict affecting key maritime routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial portion of India's crude imports normally transit. With shipping risks rising and freight and insurance costs climbing, the additional Russian barrels are being viewed as a timely intervention to steady supply lines.

The volume under discussion, while modest relative to India's total consumption, is significant in the context of short-term stress. India processes roughly five to six million barrels of crude per day, and its commercial and strategic reserves provide only a limited cushion against sudden supply shocks.

Qatar shuts LNG output; supplies to India hit

QATAR

Qatar has halted liquefied natural gas (LNG) production after its facilities came under attack amid the ongoing West Asia conflict, disrupting supplies to India and squeezing feedstock availability for key domestic sectors.

India, which depends on long-term LNG contracts with Qatar for a significant share of its gas needs, has seen a temporary suspension of cargoes, leading to supply cuts up to 40% for a range of industrial consumers and city gas distribution (CGD) companies.

While some industrial users can switch to alternative - though costlier - fuels, the CNG-retailing city gas sector has warned of severe stress. CGD operators said replacing contracted Qatari volumes with spot LNG priced at more than double the contracted rate could erode CNG's price advantage and result in a permanent shift of customers to electric vehicles.

Iran claims to have taken total control of Strait of Hormuz

The situation escalated amid Iranian media reports that the Islamic Revolutionary Guards have closed the Strait of Hormuz and that Iran would fire on any ship attempting to pass. If the waterway is closed for long, the losses could escalate to 3.8 million bpd around day 15 since the start of the conflict on February 27.

Petronet LNG Ltd, India's largest LNG importer, hasn't been able to send ships to Qatar to ferry LNG as the Strait of Hormuz - a narrow shipping route through which West Asian countries, including Qatar, export most of their oil and gas - is all but closed.

Qatar has also shut down liquefied natural gas production at the world's largest export facility - which also supplied gas to India - after it was targeted in an Iranian drone attack.

Iraq, Kuwait could stop oil exports in days

If the conflict involving Iran and the Gulf states, resulting from the Israel-US joint operation and retaliatory strikes by Tehran, does not stop by Friday, there could be a supply cut of 3.3 million barrels per day of crude oil.

Trump pledges safe Mideast oil transit

US President Donald Trump said the US will ensure safe passage of oil from the Middle East to head off a potential energy crisis caused by the war with Iran, which continues to reverberate across the region and roil markets. Trump said Wednesday said the US International Development Finance Corporation would offer insurance "at a very reasonable price" to help ensure the flow of energy and other commercial trade in the Gulf. The US Navy will begin escorting tankers through the strategic Strait of Hormuz "as soon as possible" if necessary, he said.

QUICK READ

6 children drown while taking bath in pit in Bihar

MOTIHARI: Six children, including five girls, drowned while taking bath in a water-filled pit in Bihar's East Champaran district, police said on Wednesday. The deceased have been identified as Diksha Kumari (12), Sonakshi Kumari (9), Priya Kumari (7), Arayadhya Kumari (11), Choti Kumari (8), and Prince Kumar (11). "As per villagers, when one of the girls entered the pit to take a bath, she slipped and started drowning, and in a bid to save her, the others, too, jumped into the water and drowned."

Pro-Khamenei protesters in Bengaluru booked

BENGALURU: The Bengaluru police have booked a case against those who took out a protest march in the city condemning the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Home Minister G Parameshwara said cases have been filed against the protesters who gathered in large numbers in the city without nod. "We have registered cases where they have violated the rules. First of all, they are not supposed to take out a rally without nod."

FROM PROTESTS TO POLLS

Nepal general election today, first after Gen Z toppled govt

KATHMANDU

Voting will be held on Thursday for the general elections, the first one to be held after a Gen Z youth led protest toppled the K P Sharma Oli-led government in Nepal last year.

More than 18.9 million eligible Nepalese will exercise their franchise to elect 275 member House of Representatives (HoR) from among the 3,406 candidates vying for 165 seats under direct voting and 3,135 candidates vying for 110 seats through proportionate voting.

The election campaign concluded mid-night of Monday, March 2. The voting will start at 7 am on Thursday, March 5, and conclude at 5 pm.

Acting Chief election commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari told media persons on Wednesday, "This time the voting percentage will increase and the percentage of invalid ballot papers will also decline due to improved voter education launched by the commission." He also sought cooperation from all sides to conduct the election successfully.

The Gen Z youth through their two-day intensified protests on September 8 and 9 overthrew Prime Minister Oli, chair of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) -- CPN-UML -- who was heading a coalition government with the backing of Nepali Congress that enjoyed nearly two third majority support.

After Oli was forced to resign from the post, President Ramchandra Paudel dissolved the House of Representatives on September 12 and appointed Sushila Karki as the caretaker PM.

The major issues raised by Gen Z are anti-corruption, good governance, end to nepotism, generational change in political leadership etc. CPN-UML led by Oli has emerged as the hardliner force. Though the Prachanda led NCP claims to have addressed the issues raised by the Gen Z, they have not handed over the party leadership to the younger generation.

DC Reddy stresses the proper utilization of SCP and TSP funds

MYSURU

The funds earmarked under the SCP and TSP Act must be utilized properly and officials should ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the intended benefits, instructed Deputy Commissioner G. Lakshmikanth Reddy.

He was speaking after inaugurating a one-day training workshop for implementation officers at the district and taluk levels, as well as officers under the Mysuru City Corporation limits. The workshop was organized at the University's Science Auditorium by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Department of Women and Child Development, and the Social Welfare Department.

He said that grievance meetings for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are conducted once every three months. Complaints have been received that sites reserved for SC and ST beneficiaries are being allotted to ineligible persons. This matter will be examined. It has also come to notice that funds reserved for SC and ST communities are being used for road and drainage construction in areas where these communities do not reside. An inquiry will be conducted in this regard.

Reddy further directed that development programs must be implemented in accordance with government guidelines. Based on the lists provided by members of City Municipal Councils or Gram Panchayats, works should be listed, approved, and then executed accordingly.

The DC instructed that Assistant Directors and Joint Directors of the Social Welfare Department must inspect and certify whether road and drainage works in areas predominantly inhabited by SC and ST communities are being carried out properly.

Joint Director of the Social Welfare Department B. Rangegowda said that Indian society has historically been stratified, leading to a caste-based hierarchy. Therefore, the government has implemented several laws and regulations to ensure the social, economic, and educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

He warned that misuse of funds under the SCP and TSP Act will invite punishment. These funds must be used exclusively for the development of SC and ST communities. The grants should be spent to uplift these communities socially, economically, and educationally, as many among them continue to live in poverty.

The program was attended by K.R. Shankar, Project Director of Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, along with district-level and taluk-level officials.

Lunar eclipse: Temple Purification and Special Pooja held

MYSURU

At the Panchamukhi Anjaneya Swamy Temple located on Irwin Road in the city, the temple was ritually purified after the moksha (conclusion) of the Ketu-grasta lunar eclipse.

On the following day, Wednesday, a collective Grahan Shanti Homa (ritual fire ceremony for eclipse pacification) was performed with devotion for the welfare of the world, under the leadership of the temple's chief priest, Vidwan Krishnamurthy.

Subsequently, Maha Mangalaarati was offered, and theertha prasada was distributed to the devotees who had gathered.

Government Schemes Must Directly Reach Tribal Communities" - Prof. D. Anand

MYSURU

Government schemes formulated by the Central and State Governments for the development of tribal communities must directly reach the beneficiaries. Only then can true development be achieved, said Prof. D. Anand.

He was speaking after inaugurating a one-day national seminar on welfare programs for tribal communities in southern states, organized at the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute. The seminar was held under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, and the Karnataka State Department of Backward Classes Welfare.

He said that special programs for tribal communities are being implemented in states such as Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The State Government has implemented several development programs under the SCP and TSP schemes. However, all states must come together to formulate comprehensive and coordinated schemes.

Anand noted that even during the reign of Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, programs were formulated for the development of tribal communities. Kerala ranks number one in poverty eradication and literacy. For the empowerment of tribal communities, schemes related to education, health, economic upliftment, and social welfare must be implemented. Through the State Government's five guarantee schemes, progress and self-reliance among women have been encouraged. Development should not lead to the exploitation of tribal communities. Society's perspective towards tribal people must change. Research Officer of the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute, Shivakumar C., said that in Karnataka, the SCP and TSP schemes have been highly beneficial for the development of tribal communities. There are 12 Ekalavya residential schools in the state. In addition, there are Morarji Desai Residential Schools and Kittur Rani Chennamma Residential Schools. Each taluk has an Adivasi Bhavan (tribal community center). The State Government has also formulated schemes to provide employment to tribal youth.

He stressed the need to curb alcoholism in tribal areas and ensure that tribal children are directly enrolled in schools and colleges. Only through education can true development be achieved. Educated tribal people should understand government schemes and make proper use of them, he said.

Deputy Director H.S. Girija of the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute said that researchers must study whether government schemes are actually reaching tribal communities. Their institute has also conducted study visits to Kerala. Discussions should be held on whether welfare schemes of other states can be adapted and implemented in Karnataka. Detailed information about schemes from other states should be shared with tribal communities and their opinions gathered, she added.

The seminar was attended by Dr. Mohankumar, Dr. Kalavathi, Prasannakumar, Ravikumar, B.R. Manjunath, Ramesh K., Accounts Officer B.R. Bhavya, Superintendent M.V. Nagaratna, Nagendra Hebbar, Vijayakumar, and office staff.

Demand to Establish a Govt Engineering College in Mysuru

MYSURU

Representatives of the Ahinda Coordination Committee, Mysuru, have urged the government to establish a government-owned engineering college in Mysuru city or at any suitable location in the district to benefit poor students.

They stated that although Mysuru district, which is the home district of the Chief Minister and is world-renowned, has all necessary facilities, it does not have a government engineering college. While there are 12 privately owned engineering colleges, there is not a single government-run engineering college. Poor students from economically weaker families are unable to afford the high fees charged by private institutions. Therefore, if a government engineering college is established in Mysuru on the lines of a government medical college, it would greatly help poor students pursue technical education, said Harakumar, a leader of the Ahinda Coordination Committee.

He told a press conference here on Wednesday that neighboring districts such as Mandya, Chamarajanagar, and Kodagu have government medical and engineering colleges. In Mysuru, there is a medical college and research center established as a contribution of the Maharaja, as well as a law college. However, the absence of a government engineering college is disappointing.

He urged the Chief Minister to approve the establishment of a government engineering college for Mysuru in the upcoming budget.

Mysuru, known as a cultural city, tourism city, palace city, and education hub, enjoys fame in many ways. However, it is regrettable that it does not have a government engineering college. Establishing such a college in Mysuru city or district would enable poor students from surrounding rural areas to pursue engineering degrees and become engineers. They also appealed to the Chief Minister to provide necessary facilities, including hostel accommodation for male and female students pursuing engineering studies. Another representative, Vishakantha, stated that the Chief Minister, who has provided several welfare schemes, would leave a lasting legacy if he grants this facility to the rapidly growing city of Mysuru. He urged the Chief Minister to make this contribution to his home district. Committee leaders Badanavalu Basavanna, B. Borayya, and Somayya Maleyuru were also present at the press conference and supported the demand for establishing a government engineering college in Mysuru.

MLC Yatindra promises to clear lake encroachments in Varuna constituency

MYSURU

Encroached lakes in Varuna constituency will be cleared and developed by the Minor Irrigation Department, said Legislative Council member Dr. Yathindra Siddaramaiah.

Speaking after receiving complaints from the public in Tayur villages of Gejjaganahalli, Haropur, and Salundi under Tayur panchayat limits in Varuna constituency, he said that they have asked for a bus stop in Gejjaganahalli, and have asked for the development of canals. The drains should be cleaned. They have asked for jobs for children. Similarly, they have asked for road development in Haropur village, lake development, a compound for the temple, land for the cemetery, and a site. " I will discuss all your problems with the officials and talk to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and try to resolve them".

He said that taluk-level officials here should immediately inform the public about the problems that can be resolved at your level.

Yatindra accused the BJP and JDS, who do not tolerate the fact that the Congress government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is stable and is implementing development programs for the people by giving guarantee schemes, and the BJP and JDS are making false allegations and misleading the people, and said, "May all your blessings be upon the Congress party and us."

On this occasion, former president of the State Valmiki Development Corporation S.C. Basavaraju, president of the zoo Rangaswamy, special officer to the Chief Minister K.N. Vijay, close aides Shivaswamy, Pradeep Kumar, Mahesh, leaders Maniyya, Kalmalli Babu, Chinnamballi Raju, G.D. Vitthal, Tayur Basavaraju, Rajesh, Shivanna, Kumar, Nagaraj were present.

New office-bearers of Mysuru branch of SIRC of ICAI

MYSURU

The Mysuru Branch of SIRC of ICAI serves Chartered Accountants and CA students across Mysuru, Madikeri, Mandya, Chamarajanagar and Hassan districts through quality training programmes, seminars and professional development initiatives in Accounting, Audit, Taxation and allied fields. CA's are the undisputed experts in Accounting, Audit and Taxation. The office bearers of the Managing Committee assumed office for the Council Year 20262027 with effect from 26th Feb 2026 and are as follows: Chairman - Venkatesh Swamy L Vice Chairman - Rajesh R Secretary - Sharatchandra BR Treasurer - Kanchana MR SICASA Chairperson – Garima Chopra MC Member & Immediate Past Chairman - Bhargava S Seated (L to R) – Sharatchandra BR, Venkatesh Swamy L and Rajesh R Standing (L to R) - Kanchana RM, Bhargava S and Garima Chopra.

Warm Farewell to Chief Engineer Mrityunjaya

MYSURU

Mrityunjaya, who served as the Chief Engineer of the Mysuru Circle of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC), was given a warm farewell at the CESC Head Office in the city on the occasion of his retirement from service.

The farewell ceremony was held under the leadership of CESC Managing Director K.M. Munigopal Raju, where Chief Engineer Mrityunjaya was warmly felicitated and congratulated.

On the occasion, senior and junior officers of CESC spoke and appreciated Mrityunjaya's work style, dedication, and sincerity towards his duties. They expressed happiness at having had the opportunity to work with him and wished him a pleasant and fulfilling retired life. Speaking after receiving the felicitation, Mrityunjaya said, securing a government job is the result of their good fortune. Therefore, they must all discharge their duties with a spirit of service. If there is dedication and honesty in their work, respect and appreciation from the public will naturally follow.

Mrityunjaya possessed a positive attitude towards his work. His work ethic was exemplary for everyone. However, we were not able to make more effective use of his vast service experience. We wish Mrityunjaya a happy and peaceful retired life.

—K.M. Munigopal Raju,
Managing Director, CESC

He recalled that during his tenure, he did not undergo many transfers and had served for a long period in Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM). He advised senior officers not to step back from their responsibilities and urged everyone to work together for the growth of the organization.

He emphasized that employees should work with honesty and integrity towards the institution, consider the organization as their own home, and maintain professional confidentiality. He also advised junior officers to remain studious and cultivate an interest in learning new subjects.

The program was attended by CESC Technical Director D.J. Divakar, along with senior and junior officers and staff members.

Yaduveer Wadiyar Appeals to CM to Save KSIC Filature Factory

MYSURU

The cultural city of Mysuru continues to be renowned for its silk sarees. The KSIC silk factory unit located in T. Narasipura serves as a lifeline for hundreds of workers. In this regard, Mysuru–Kodagu Lok Sabha MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar has appealed to the Chief Minister to take steps to preserve the unit.

MP Yaduveer Wadiyar met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah recently and later issued a press statement regarding the matter.

He stated that 6 acres and 8 guntas of land within the KSIC Filature factory premises have been handed over to the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports for the construction of a stadium. If the stadium is built, the livelihoods of workers and farmers will be severely affected. Therefore, he has urged the Chief Minister to reconsider the decision.

There are more than 500 teak and sandalwood trees within the KSIC factory premises. If the stadium construction proceeds, these trees would be destroyed. The MP emphasized the need to preserve the historic unit.

He has also appealed that the government reconsider this decision and instead identify alternative government land at Korlahalli or elsewhere for constructing the stadium. The Chief Minister has received the memorandum, Yaduveer Wadiyar informed.

CALL TO EXPEDITE AIRPORT EXPANSION PROCESS

MP Yaduveer Wadiyar also requested the Chief Minister to speed up the expansion of the Mysuru airport and complete the land acquisition process on a fast track.

He expressed confidence that the land acquisition and other related works are nearly complete. Once confirmation is received, he said he would exert pressure on the Central Government to ensure that all pending works are completed at the earliest.

Pic by Hampa Nagaraju

A Melange of Colours rent the air in Mysuru...

MYSURU

Mysuru came alive in a riot of colours on Wednesday as people enthusiastically celebrated Holi, the festival of colours, with unmatched joy and vibrancy. Streets turned into a canvas of pinks, yellows, and blues as youngsters smeared gulal on one another, danced to festive beats, and raised cheers of celebration. Clouds of bright yellow and orange colour powder filled the air, creating a breathtaking spectacle that reflected the true spirit of togetherness.

Groups of friends marched through the city lanes, their faces unrecognizable under layers of colour, yet glowing with wide smiles. Music, laughter, and playful banter echoed across the area, drawing curious onlookers and spreading festive cheer.

Holi, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil and the arrival of spring, was celebrated peacefully, with participants exchanging greetings and sweets.

The celebration in Mysuru once again showcased the city's vibrant cultural spirit and unity in diversity, turning an ordinary Wednesday into a kaleidoscope of happiness.

Swachhata Road Show on March 8

"Clean Mysuru Begins with Me" Initiative

MYSURU

Mysuru City Corporation has organized a Swachhata Road Show on March 8, starting from the Mysuru Palace premises to Oval Grounds, under the theme "Swachha Mysuru Nanninda Prarambha" (Clean Mysuru Begins with Me).

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will be invited to inaugurate the programme. The event is being organized with the intention of encouraging maximum participation from environmentally conscious organizations and associations.

Speaking on the occasion, Mysuru City Corporation Commissioner Sheikh Tanveer Asif said that the road show will feature vintage cars, a women's bike rally (as March 8 marks International Women's Day), a cycle rally, mounted horse teams, tongas (horse carts), and various other groups. At the concluding venue, Oval Grounds, live demonstrations will be organized to create public awareness on building a clean Mysuru. These will include: Preparation of useful items from construction and demolition waste, E-waste management, Plastic waste management, Biomedical waste management.

Among those present at the meeting were: Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru City Corporation, Veena, President of Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, K.B. Lingaraju, Director of Clean Foundation Mysore, Leela Venkatesh, Prakash Meti from SELCO Foundation, Environmental science researcher Gopi Kiran H, Shri Ram D from GSS Project, CREDAI Sridhar and others

Exhibition on March 6

Mysuru City Corporation, in collaboration with SELCO Foundation, Bengaluru, is holding a Solar-Supported Workshop and Livelihood Solutions Exhibition titled "Steps Towards Development for Persons with Disabilities and Women" on March 6.

The programme will be held from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM at Sri Rangacharlu Memorial Hall (Town Hall), with the inaugural ceremony scheduled at 10:00 AM.

The event will be inaugurated by Nitish Patil, Regional Commissioner and Administrator of Mysuru City Corporation. Deputy Commissioner G. Lakshmikanth Reddy and Mysuru City Corporation Commissioner Sheikh Tanveer Asif will attend as chief guests.

Other distinguished guests include:Raghavendra, District Welfare Officer for Persons with Disabilities, Narasimhamurthy, State Coordinator (DEDASC), Bengaluru, K.R. Shankar, Project Director of CCST, PWD, SVYM, Rucha Limaye from SELCO Foundation, Sukumar K, Area Manager, SELCO India.

The exhibition aims to empower women and persons with disabilities by showcasing sustainable, solar-powered livelihood solutions and innovative technologies to improve economic independence.

Mocked the Cops, Posted the Proof - Youths Nabbed by Siddharthnagar Traffic Police

SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM
MYSURU

What began as a reckless joyride turned into a hard lesson for two youngsters who tried to outsmart the traffic police — and ended up exposing themselves on social media.

The two youths were riding a two-wheeler without helmets when they passed by traffic personnel conducting routine vehicle checks on the opposite side of the road within the limits of the Siddharthnagar Traffic Police Station. Instead of slowing down, the rider allegedly revved up the engine to full throttle, zooming past the police at neck-breaking speed as if to mock their presence.

Eyewitnesses said the duo sped dangerously along the busy main road, putting not only their own lives at risk but also endangering other commuters. The incident might have ended there, unnoticed and unpunished, had it not been for their own actions later. In a display of bravado, the youths reportedly uploaded a video of their stunt on social media, adding a Kannada song with lyrics suggesting they were unafraid of the police and would continue performing wheelies and overspeeding.

The provocative tone of the post caught the attention of the traffic department — and did not go down well. Irritated by the open defiance, Siddharthnagar traffic police launched a swift operation to track down the duo. Leveraging their local intelligence network and digital clues, officers successfully identified the youths and brought them to the police station for questioning.

The two were penalised for riding without helmets and for not possessing valid driving licences. In addition, they were made to delete the offending video from social media and were counselled about road safety and legal consequences.

Traffic officials have issued a stern warning to the youth of Mysuru: reckless riding and online glorification of traffic violations will not be tolerated. "Think twice before riding without a helmet. If you post such videos on social media, you are leaving digital evidence behind. You will be caught," an officer cautioned.

The message is loud and clear — in the age of social media, showing off can come at a cost.

KERC HIKES POWER TARIFF FOR INDUSTRIES AHEAD OF BUDGET

Mysore Industries Association alleges Govt pressure

MYSURU

Even before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presents the State Budget, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has revised electricity tariffs, drawing sharp criticism from industrial bodies. The Mysore Industries Association (MIA) has termed the move a "shock" to the industrial sector and alleged that the regulator has bowed to government pressure.

In a press release here on Wednesday, MIA president P Vishwanath said the tariff hike would severely impact industries, particularly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are already reeling under financial stress. As per the revised order, Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Company has increased the fixed charge for LT-5 industrial consumers from ₹4.50 to ₹5.20 per unit, adding 70 paise. In addition, a fixed charge of ₹15 per horsepower has been imposed. Under the HT-2A category, the tariff has been revised to ₹6.60 per unit, reflecting an increase of 10 paise, while the fixed charge has been raised to ₹20 per horsepower. However, clarity is awaited on the exact date of implementation.

Providing background, Vishwanath said that during the April 2025 tariff revision, KERC had reduced rates for industrial and commercial users while increasing tariffs for subsidised agricultural pump sets. The Commission had reportedly urged the State Government to enhance subsidy allocations to offset the burden on industries, but the government did not agree. Subsequently, KERC had increased the subsidy burden on the government and eased the load on industries. However, following a review petition filed by the State, the burden has now been shifted back to industries, he alleged.

He criticised the State Government for acting contrary to the Union Government's suggestion to reduce cross-subsidy. Instead of rationalising subsidies, industries are being penalized. The annual tariff order for 2026-27 is due in April, and another revision is likely, which will impact all categories of consumers. Warning that the latest hike could dampen industrial growth and investment sentiment, MIA urged the government to reconsider the decision and protect the interests of MSMEs and the manufacturing sector.

CALL TO STRENGTHEN KSRTC NETWORK TO EASE MYSURU TRAFFIC

Former Corporator urges satellite bus stand model to decongest heritage city

MYSURU

With Mysuru witnessing rapid urban expansion and a steady surge in tourist inflow, former Mysuru City Corporation member K.V. Mallesh has urged the authorities to strengthen the city and rural transport systems to ensure smooth traffic movement and prevent worsening congestion.

In a representation addressed to the Divisional Controller of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Mysuru City and Rural Divisions, Mallesh highlighted the growing traffic pressure following the launch of the Bengaluru–Mysuru Expressway. The improved connectivity has significantly increased the movement of people and vehicles between Mysuru and Bengaluru, apart from commuters from surrounding villages and towns. Tourist arrivals from neighbouring states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, as well as from various districts of Karnataka, have multiplied in recent years. Consequently, during weekends, long holidays, and the world-famous Mysuru Dasara festival, severe congestion is witnessed in the heart of the city, leading to traffic disruptions. "Tourists who visit Mysuru to escape the congestion and stress of Bengaluru are now facing a similar situation here," Mallesh observed, stressing the need for multi-level measures to decongest the city centre.

On behalf of Aniketana Seva Trust (R) and the public, the former corporator urged KSRTC to effectively utilise the satellite bus stands constructed years ago in all four directions of the city. Well-equipped bus stands at Kuvempunagar, Sathagalli, Ilavala and Bannimantap, have not been fully used for transport purposes, with substantial portions leased out for commercial establishments.

While acknowledging that such leasing generates revenue, Mallesh stated that the primary objective of easing traffic through decentralised bus operations has not been achieved. The inter-state, inter-district and rural buses should be made to halt at these satellite bus stands, on the lines of Bengaluru's satellite bus stand system, to reduce pressure on the central city bus stand.

Mallesh further recommended construction of additional well-equipped satellite bus stands along remaining entry routes to Mysuru. Strengthening city bus connectivity from these points to commercial hubs, tourist destinations and new residential layouts would promote decentralised growth and reduce the need for rural commuters to enter the core city area. There is a need for the systematic development of the bus stand under construction at the Bannimantap depot, keeping in view future growth and traffic density. The coordinated efforts is required between the City and Rural Transport Divisions of KSRTC to build a "future-ready" public transport network. Appealing to the Transport Department, the Transport Minister and the State Government, he requested allocation of special grants in the current Budget and sought the intervention of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to prioritise strengthening Mysuru's public transport infrastructure.

Science Must Serve Society: Prof N.K. Loknath

National Science Day Inspires Innovation, Entrepreneurship at University of Mysore

MYSURU

Scientific research is the driving force behind economic growth, technological advancement, healthcare transformation, agricultural sustainability and environmental protection, said N. K. Loknath, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore.

He was speaking at the National Science Day celebrations held at the university, commemorating the discovery of the Raman Effect by C. V. Raman on February 28, 1928. The discovery placed India firmly on the global scientific map and later earned Raman the Nobel Prize in Physics, making him the first Asian to receive the prestigious honour in science.

Prof. Loknath said National Science Day highlights the importance of translating research into real-world applications while encouraging entrepreneurship and start-up culture within universities. "Today's grand challenges — climate change, pandemics and energy security — demand collaboration across disciplines, institutions and nations," he noted.

Explaining the significance of the Raman Effect, he said it revealed how light changes wavelength when it passes through a transparent material, proving that path-breaking research could be conducted with modest equipment but immense intellectual rigor. Raman's achievements continue to inspire generations of Indian scientists to pursue excellence despite constraints.

He recalled that Raman later strengthened the Indian Institute of Science and founded the Raman Research Institute, nurturing a strong research culture in the country. Beyond his discoveries, he was a passionate teacher who believed curiosity-driven research and fearless questioning were the lifeblood of scientific progress.

Prof. Loknath said Science Day reinforces the constitutional duty to promote scientific temper and serves as a catalyst to ignite curiosity among students, encouraging them to question, explore, experiment and innovate. From ancient mathematical brilliance to modern space exploration, India's scientific tradition remains deep and dynamic, he added.

Highlighting India's achievements in space missions, digital technology, pharmaceuticals and renewable energy, he said the nation is emerging as a global scientific leader. "Science provides the tools and evidence needed to achieve sustainable development goals and ensure a resilient future for humanity," he said.

National Science Day, he added, strengthens the country's resolve towards research, innovation and societal development while celebrating the invaluable contributions of scientists, researchers and scholars.

Dr V.K.Manchand, retired head, Department of Radio Chemistry, Baba Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai delivered a special talk.

M.K.Savita, registrar, UoM and others were present.

QUICK READ

Uber's aggregator licence renewed

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

After a prolonged tussle with authorities, Uber's aggregator licence has been renewed by the Karnataka State Transport Authority (KSTA), allowing the ride-hailing platform to continue operations in the state. In a statement, Uber said the licence has been renewed under the Karnataka On-Demand Transportation Aggregator Rules, 2016. The renewed licence is valid for five years, from December 31, 2021, to December 30, 2026. Officials clarified that Uber had originally applied for a licence in 2016. Following court intervention, a licence was granted for the 2016–2021 period. After its expiry, the company sought renewal, which has now been approved after sustained follow-up with the department.

B'luru airport brawl: Tout attacks security guard at KIA, case filed

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 25-year-old security guard was allegedly assaulted and threatened by a cab driver acting as a tout at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA). The injured guard, Debasish Biswas, was on duty in the Quad area of Terminal 2 when he noticed the accused, Gangadhar, attempting to forcibly pick up passengers and causing inconvenience to others. When Biswas asked him to leave the premises, an argument broke out. Police said Gangadhar assaulted and abused Biswas and later followed him home, issuing death threats. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

AP stalling Almatti height hike; Centre must intervene: DCM

Karnataka urges Centre's intervention as Andhra objects to dam height increase

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar on Tuesday accused the Andhra Pradesh government of obstructing the proposed increase in the height of the Almatti Dam and urged the Centre to immediately intervene in the matter.

Speaking at his official residence, Shivakumar said Andhra Pradesh had written to the Union government opposing the raising of the dam's height from 519 metres to 524 metres and seeking to prevent the issuance of a gazette notification. "It is not appropriate for Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to interfere in this matter when there is already a decision in place," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister noted that the issue is currently before the Supreme Court of India. He pointed out that Karnataka had decided in a Cabinet meeting on September 16, 2025, to acquire 1.33 lakh acres of land for the project and allocate ₹70,000 crore in three phases. Compensation between ₹35 lakh and ₹40 lakh per acre had been fixed for affected landowners, he added. However, Andhra Pradesh has questioned the land acquisition process.

Shivakumar recalled that a decision taken on December 30, 2010, permitted the use of water from 177 TMC to 330 TMC. "We have been pressing for the notification for the last 12 years. Some people went to court, but there is no stay from the Supreme Court," he said.

Responding to concerns about possible flooding, he said a Central government committee had already reported that raising the height to 524 metres would not cause flooding in neighbouring states. "Nothing will happen if we keep going back to court. The Centre should act according to the earlier order," he asserted.

Shivakumar also urged Karnataka's Members of Parliament to raise the issue during the upcoming Lok Sabha session beginning March 10 and press the Prime Minister and the Union Jal Shakti Minister for a resolution. He indicated that he is preparing to lead an all-party delegation to Delhi to seek a political solution to the long-pending dispute.

Craft beer culture may be fuelling obesity in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In Bengaluru, India's microbrewery capital, doctors warn that calorie-dense craft beers — often higher in alcohol, sugar, and calories than regular lagers — are emerging as a significant contributor to weight gain.

As Bengaluru's microbrewery scene continues to thrive, doctors are raising concerns about its unintended health consequences. A recent study published in the International Journal of Obesity found a clear, dose-dependent link between alcohol consumption and Visceral Fat Mass (VFM). Using DEXA scans of 5,761 adults, researchers observed that individuals in the highest alcohol consumption group had over 10% more visceral fat than light drinkers, regardless of overall body fat.

City doctors say this pattern is increasingly visible in clinics. "Microbrewery culture has become a significant driver of weight gain, especially when added to a sedentary, high-stress urban lifestyle," said Dr. Somnath Chatterjee, Medical Director at Prakriya Hospitals. "It is rarely just one glass of beer — it's multiple pints, heavy starters, late nights, and very little movement." He noted that many young professionals are presenting with increased waist circumference, early fatty liver, borderline blood sugar, and elevated blood pressure, often with a history of frequent brewery visits.

Experts highlight that craft beers differ significantly from standard bottled lagers. While a regular beer contains about 100 to 150 calories per serving, craft beers can range from 150 to 300 calories. "If a rich craft beer has 300 calories and someone consumes five or six portions, that's 1,500 calories from beer alone," said Dr. Gaurav Singh of Gleneagles Hospital. Combined with food, a single outing can total 2,500 to 3,000 calories.

Doctors also point to calorie-dense brewery menus — fried starters, cheesy pizzas, creamy pastas and desserts — as compounding the problem. Beyond weight gain, physicians report abnormal liver enzymes, disturbed sleep, gastritis, acid reflux and increased diabetes risk among regular consumers.

BOX: Dr. Manjunath Malige of Sakra World Hospital noted that nearly one in two adults in urban clinical settings is overweight or obese due to multiple lifestyle factors.

Groundwater Crisis: BWSSB Readies ₹10-Crore Summer Plan

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

As many as 65 wards in the city's western and northern corporation limits have reported alarming groundwater depletion, prompting the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to roll out a ₹10-crore summer action plan to avert shortages.

A recent study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), conducted in collaboration with central and State groundwater agencies, flagged a looming crisis as Bengaluru braces for another intense summer marked by soaring temperatures and rising demand. Officials said the report used AI-driven analytics and Internet of Things-based groundwater monitoring systems to track water tables across vulnerable zones.

Scientists analysed borewell data, recharge patterns, extraction rates and seasonal variability before projecting peak summer stress. While trends mirror last year's findings, the decline is sharper in high-density residential pockets and apartment clusters in north, northwest and east Bengaluru.

BWSSB's mitigation plan prioritises new water connections in affected wards, intensified borewell surveillance and ensuring optimal functioning of RO plants. Field teams have been directed to repair damaged pipelines, identify households without formal connections and fast-track supply to apartment complexes.

Chairperson Ram Prasath Manohar said additional storage tanks will be installed in vulnerable localities, with temporary water distribution points set up in slums and densely populated areas. Efforts will also be made to strengthen Cauvery water supply wherever feasible.

Construction sites will be monitored to ensure exclusive use of treated water. Public taps at temples, malls and government offices will be fitted with aerators to curb wastage. Penalties will be imposed for non-essential use of potable water for vehicle washing, gardening and cleaning.

"We are not waiting for tankers to become the only option. Preventive steps are being implemented immediately in all 65 wards identified as groundwater-stress zones," Manohar said.

Affected areas include Jakkur, Hebbal, Nagawara, Ramamurthy Nagar, KR Puram, Vijayanagar, Nagarabhavi, Koramangala and Kengeri, among others.

Loan-recovery agent stabbed to death after stepping on man's foot

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 31-year-old loan-recovery agent was allegedly murdered following a trivial altercation while eating dosa outside a hotel in Basaveshwaranagar.

The victim, Shashikumar, had gone to Sri Raghavendra Veg and Dosa Corner on Thimmaiah Road with a friend. Around the same time, the accused, identified as Manjunath, was also at the eatery. According to police, the small hotel has limited space, forcing customers to stand on the footpath and roadside while eating.

During the rush, Shashikumar allegedly stepped on Manjunath's foot, sparking a heated argument. In a fit of rage, the two reportedly manhandled each other. Manjunath then called his brother, Bhagyaraj alias Papu, to the spot. Police said that soon after arriving, the brothers allegedly assaulted Shashikumar and stabbed him on the neck and shoulder. He collapsed on the spot and succumbed to his injuries before he could be shifted to hospital. A case has been registered and further investigation is under way.

Employer cannot curtail Child Care Leave sought by employee: HC

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The High Court has ruled that an employer has no authority to decide whether the reasons cited by an employee for seeking Child Care Leave (CCL) are sufficient, nor can it restrict the period of leave sought in the absence of specific statutory power.

A division bench comprising Justices S.G. Pandit and K.V. Aravind held that no discretion is conferred upon the employer or competent authority to adjudicate the adequacy of reasons assigned for CCL. In the absence of such power, curtailing the leave period requested by an employee is impermissible, the court observed.

The ruling came while hearing a petition filed by the Ministry of Electronics and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Bengaluru, challenging an order of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). The case arose after Kavita Vadde, an Administrative Officer at C-DAC, applied for CCL from December 16, 2025, to May 20, 2026, to assist her son in preparing for his Class 10 board examinations. However, she was granted only 18 days of leave from February 6 to March 7, 2026, based on the examination schedule.

Aggrieved, she approached the CAT in Bengaluru, which on February 5 directed the authorities to grant leave from February 6 till May 20 in accordance with the rules. The Ministry challenged this order before the High Court, arguing that sanctioning leave beyond the period strictly required would disrupt departmental functioning and defeat the object of granting such leave. Counsel for Kavita contended that the examinations were conducted in multiple stages, including preboards and two phases of the main exams.

Motorists to pay for parking on 42 Jayanagar roads

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has rolled out a pay-and-park system across 42 road stretches in Jayanagar as part of a phased effort to regulate on-street parking in commercial areas.

The first phase will cover 31.7 km of road network, creating designated parking for 914 cars and 3,835 two-wheelers. Civic officials said the move addresses unscientific parking practices that have significantly reduced carriageway width in busy corridors.

With Bengaluru's vehicle population nearing 1.5 crore within the 800 sq. km GBA limits — besides thousands entering daily from neighbouring districts — authorities said parking regulation has become essential.

GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao said the initiative aims to bring order rather than impose a burden. "This is not a revenue-first measure; it is a traffic management intervention. Residential streets are not included in this phase," he clarified.

Officials said structured parking will help reclaim road space, improve pedestrian safety and reduce friction between motorists and enforcement agencies. Zone-wise tenders were floated, with Central, South, East and North corporations identifying priority corridors.

Earlier attempts in core areas such as MG Road and Church Street required re-tendering due to limited bidder response. A senior planning official noted that surveys found parked vehicles occupying up to 40% of available road width during peak hours in some commercial pockets.

"Without priced parking, there is no turnover. Vehicles remain parked for hours, restricting access and worsening congestion. Paid parking ensures rotation and better utilisation," the official said.

After assessing public response in Jayanagar, the system will be extended in phases to BTM Layout, Bommanahalli and Padmanabhanagar, authorities added.

K.J. George Reviews Works, Assures Model Growth for Sarvagnanagar

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Energy Minister K. J. George on Wednesday reviewed ongoing infrastructure projects in Sarvagnanagar Assembly constituency and expressed confidence that the constituency will soon emerge as a model segment driven by quality infrastructure and future-ready planning.

During his visit to Nagawara, the Minister inspected white-topping road works and said the initiative would ensure durable, pothole-free roads and enhanced safety for motorists. He noted that as residential layouts expand, pressure on underground drainage and sewage systems has increased. To address this, modern solutions such as the Integrated Sewage Pumping System (ISPS) and systematic tank construction are being implemented to prevent monsoon-related flooding and improve long-term waste management.

Later, he visited Hennur Bande to review development works and assess projects under the Energy Department. He also discussed the construction of essential office buildings for Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM).

At the Nagawara Metro Station site, he directed Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) to prioritize road widening to avoid future congestion.

He also visited Karnataka Public School in Doddabanaswadi and assured funds for new classrooms.

ACTION FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

2 waste bins mandatory for buildings above 2 floors

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Dwelling units with more than two floors in the city will soon be required to maintain at least two waste-collection bins within their premises, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao announced during a public grievance meeting of the East Corporation.

The directive comes amid mounting complaints about irregular garbage collection and poor waste management. Over 200 residents attended the meeting at the corporation office, with many flagging delayed or missed visits by garbage collection vehicles.

Responding to the concerns, Rao instructed the health department to treat waste management as a public health priority and draft a regulation mandating two separate bins — one for wet waste and another for dry waste — in all buildings above two floors. The rule will also apply to Paying Guest (PG) accommodations. "Our vehicles will collect waste from the bins regularly," Rao assured residents.

It remains unclear whether the regulation will initially apply only to the East Corporation or be extended across all city corporations under the GBA.

Residents highlighted practical challenges. V.P. Krishna from TC Palya said many working professionals are unable to hand over waste when collection vehicles arrive during office hours. "It would help if vehicles could come twice a day, morning and evening," he said.

Rao acknowledged the concern but cited resource constraints. "Currently, we do not have the capacity to send vehicles twice daily. However, a new waste management package tender is in the pipeline and should improve the situation," he said. He added that the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management team will prepare a micro-plan to streamline operations in the area.

Apart from waste management, residents raised issues of building violations, alleging lax enforcement and delays in demolition of unauthorized structures. Rao directed engineers to act promptly on complaints and, after due inspection, ensure that electricity and water connections to violators are disconnected. He also sought status reports on buildings where demolition orders had been issued but not implemented.

The meeting witnessed brief disruptions when residents holding token numbers above 100 protested long waiting times and the closed-door format. More than 150 tokens were issued, with grievances heard individually in a conference hall.

Some participants argued that a closed setting defeated the purpose of public interaction. Rao responded by promising future meetings in open venues and directed officials to conduct ward-level meetings at least once a month, preferably on Saturdays, to address civic issues more effectively.

Magadi lakes to receive Cauvery water supply: D.K. Shivakumar

Shivakumar said a 160 HP pump will fill lakes across 115 km, boosting groundwater and benefiting farmers' agriculture

MAGADI

Deputy Chief Minister and Water Resources Minister D.K. Shivakumar said the people of Magadi are fortunate to receive water from Cauvery, Hemavati, and Yettinahole rivers as he laid the foundation stone for the Y.G. Gudda Lift Irrigation Project on Wednesday.

Shivakumar explained that water will be pumped over a 115 km stretch—from Sattegal to Iggalur, then Mogenahalli, Kanva, and finally to Y.G. Gudda—using a 160 HP pump. The initiative aims to fill lakes and increase groundwater levels, benefiting farmers and strengthening local agriculture.

He criticized previous leaders, asking why projects supporting farmers were not executed earlier, and emphasized that his government focuses on "today's work, not promises of tomorrow."

The Minister highlighted other government initiatives, including providing free 10 HP electricity to farmers' pump sets, land documents to 2.20 lakh beneficiaries, and various social welfare schemes.

He stressed that decisions taken by his administration are meant to empower people, increase land value, and improve infrastructure in the region.

Shivakumar also addressed concerns over the district's name, confirming that Bengaluru South District retains its identity despite earlier changes, while praising property compensation decisions in the Bidadi Township project.

Bamul President D.K. Suresh, present at the ceremony, said Shivakumar's vision is to make Bengaluru South a model district. He noted that over Rs. 1,000 crore worth of development work, including roads and irrigation projects, is ongoing. Suresh requested officials to complete pending works by May so that Y.G. Gudda and nearby lakes will receive Cauvery water throughout the year.

The Rs. 92 crore project is expected to fill lakes like Chakrabavi and provide lasting water security for farmers. Shivakumar, speaking alongside local leaders and MLA Balakrishna, urged citizens to support the ongoing development work and reaffirmed the government's commitment to farmers and the district's prosperity.

BMTC bus services launched to Ramanagara

RAMANAGARA

The long-awaited BMTC bus service has been launched to Ramanagara and Kanakapura, providing residents with comfortable and reliable transport to Bengaluru city. Transport Minister Ramalingareddy inaugurated the new "Vajra Vistara" air-conditioned buses on Wednesday at the city's KSRTC bus stand.

The minister said the BMTC's operational area has been extended from 25 km to 40 km outside Bengaluru city limits to better serve commuters. "We will add more buses during school hours and in rural areas if necessary, and proposals to set up new bus stations in Ramanagara and Harohalli will be considered," he said.

A total of 124 bus schedules across 11 key routes are now running to urban hubs like Attibele, Anekal, Devanahalli, Doddaballapura, Nelamangala, Dabaspet, Bidadi, Harohalli, and Hoskote.

A total of 124 buses across 11 routes connect urban hubs, serving 60,000 passengers daily and generating about Rs. 18 lakh in revenue each day

Around 60,000 passengers use these services daily, generating approximately Rs. 18 lakh in revenue each day.

The BMTC operates over 6,300 schedules and 66,315 trips daily, covering more than 13 lakh km and serving 45 lakh passengers. In the Bengaluru South district, 1,332 trips operate from 145 schedules in Harohalli, and 1,163 trips from 136 schedules in Bidadi.

Ramanagara MLA H.A. Iqbal Hussain thanked the minister and requested better bus stops in the district to accommodate the extended service. Officials and staff from KSRTC, BMTC, and the local authorities, including V.S. Aaradhya, K. Raju, Nataraju Ganakal, Chethan Kumar, K. Seshadri, V.H. Raju, and Anmol Jain, were present at the launch. Vice President Niketh Raj urged the public to use this facility, noting that BMTC's expansion to the outskirts will help citizens avoid high private transport costs and rising fuel prices. The service is expected to improve connectivity and convenience for thousands of daily commuters in the region.

QUICK READ

Applications invited for admission to 8th class

Chitradurga

Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Mysore has invited applications for admission to the 8th class for the current academic year. The admissions are open to male children belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and students from underprivileged families. A selection entrance examination will be held at the school on April 15 at 10:00 AM. Interested candidates can obtain application forms from the office of the Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department. Completed applications along with the required documents should be submitted to Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Yadavagiri, Mysore-570020 by March 25, 2026.

Chitradurga holds workshop on child protection

Chitradurga

A one-day workshop on the Karnataka State Child Protection Policy (2016, revised 2023) and the Child Protection Act will be held on March 5 at the Zilla Panchayat Mini Hall. The event is organized by the State Child Rights Commission, District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Women and Child Development Department, and District Child Protection Unit. Dr. Thippeswamy K.T. will inaugurate the workshop at 10:30 am. Vijayakumar K.H. will preside. Principals from local colleges and schools will attend. Experts, including Hanumanthappa B.M., will guide discussions to improve child safety in the district.

Tumakuru student's film 'Antaryam' releases March 6

TUMAKURU

Antaryam, a new Kannada film produced and acted by Naveen N.G. Pranav, a student of Sri Siddhartha Media Center, is set to release in theatres on March 6. The film marks a proud moment for the institution and showcases the creative strength of young media professionals.

Originally from Saraswathipuram in Tumakuru, Naveen completed his M.S. in Communication and explored areas like screenwriting, audio-video editing, and lighting design during his studies. Along with his classmates, he formed a team to gain hands-on experience in filmmaking. Their collective effort has now taken shape as Antaryam.

The film focuses on the struggles and emotional conflicts faced by youth in the age of social media. With a fresh storyline and modern filmmaking techniques, Naveen has attempted to question traditional narratives and present a new perspective. He has earlier worked in different stages of films such as Kaday Mane, Mavutha, Inti, and Sharade.

Directed by K. Dhananjayya, the film has Dr. Kamala Narasimhan as co-producer. Lyrics are penned by Vinay Kavyakanti, also an alumnus of the same institution. Several former students contributed to cinematography, editing, sound design, and acting. The release of Antaryam highlights how young talent from Tumakuru is making its mark in the evolving world of cinema and digital storytelling.

Kumaraswamy said accurate census block formation is vital, directing officials to inspect blocks and coordinate closely with field staff

No Confusion Allowed in 2027 Census: Kumaraswamy

CHITRADURGA

Preparations for the Census of India 2027 have gathered pace in the district, with officials instructed to ensure complete accuracy and avoid any confusion in the process.

Inaugurating a three-day training workshop at the Zilla Panchayat Hall on Wednesday, Additional Deputy Commissioner and District Census Officer B.T. Kumaraswamy stressed the importance of careful planning and coordination. The workshop was organised to train district officers, charge officers, and census staff for the upcoming nationwide exercise.

Kumaraswamy said that proper formation of census blocks is the backbone of the entire operation. Even a minor mistake in block formation could disturb the whole process. He directed officials to personally visit and inspect each block under their jurisdiction. He also advised close coordination with field-level staff, including ward bill collectors.

Enumerators should be appointed from the same blocks where they live or work. In unavoidable situations, only government employees residing within a 200-metre radius should be assigned. Tahsildars were instructed to appoint enumerators and supervisors at the earliest and issue official orders.

Calling census duty a proud and memorable responsibility, Kumaraswamy said census data forms the foundation for national development planning. "This is like a squirrel's contribution to nation building," he said, urging officers to work with honesty and dedication. He warned against any negligence in maintaining accuracy.

The Census of India, first conducted in 1872, is now entering its 16th phase. Postponed earlier due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2027 census will be conducted in two phases, beginning with house listing and housing census.

For the first time, the entire process will be carried out through a mobile application instead of the manual system, ensuring greater transparency and precision. Officials were told to identify blocks covering 150 to 200 families and prepare accurate maps and lists.

Several senior officers attended the training programme.

Media Academy announces training for women journalists

CHITRADURGA

The Karnataka Media Academy has invited applications from women journalists for a special training program under the Infosys Springboard CSR initiative. The last date to apply is March 10.

The three-day residential training will be held from March 25 to 27 at the Infosys campus in Mysore. Women journalists with at least five years of experience in media organizations listed under the Department of Information and Public Relations are eligible to apply.

Applicants must submit their photograph, age proof, service records, and confirmation from their media organization through the Google form link provided by the academy.

Selected participants will receive travel allowance as per rules.

The program will cover digital media skills, use of artificial intelligence, leadership qualities, and soft skills development. The academy stated that final selection of candidates will be based on scrutiny of applications.

Bheemgayana program to celebrate equality ideals

CHITRADURGA

The district administration will organize the "Bheemgayana" program on March 7 at 10:30 am at Shivsharan Madara Channaiah Sabha Bhavan (Lidkar Bhavan). The event is jointly hosted by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Information and Public Relations Department, Social Welfare Department, and Scheduled Caste Welfare Department.

The cultural team "Amma Vasundhare Kalathanda" from Saragur will present songs spreading the ideals of equality inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Buddha, and Basavanna. Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the event. Several MLAs, MPs, board chairpersons, and district officials, including District Collector T. Venkatesh and Superintendent of Police Ranjit Kumar Bandaru, will attend.

District Information Officer Tukaramrao B.V. has invited leaders of Dalit organizations, students, and the public to participate in large numbers and make the celebration meaningful.

Tragic road accident: Five from Bengaluru killed

KOLAR

A deadly road accident claimed the lives of five people from Bengaluru when their car collided with a container truck near Gangavaram, Palamaner in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh.

The deceased have been identified as Mohan Das (71), Nagaraj (61), Kusuma (61), Jayanthi (59), and Pooja (33). The group was travelling from Bengaluru to Tirupati when the mishap occurred. All five died on the spot due to the severity of the collision.

According to officials, the accident happened because the driver fell asleep at the wheel while negotiating a bend in the road. The car, which was reportedly speeding, lost control and hit the container from behind. Transport authorities highlighted that road conditions and driver fatigue were contributing factors.

Palamaneru police visited the site, conducted an initial inspection, and registered a case in connection with the accident. The bodies were sent for post-mortem examination at Palamaneru Government Hospital before being handed over to the families for last rites.

Madiga groups lock taluk office protest

CHITRADURGA

Tension prevailed in Molakalmuru town after organisations of the Madiga community locked the taluk office and staged a strong protest demanding internal reservation. The agitators opposed the State government's move to fill nearly 56,000 government posts without implementing internal reservation.

Protesters asked officials and staff to step out of the office before locking the main gates. Leaders and members then gathered in front of the building, beating drums and raising slogans in support of their long-pending demand. Police were present to monitor the situation.

Community leaders said internal reservation is the rightful share of the Madiga community and the result of a 35 year long struggle for justice in education and employment. They stated that as per a Supreme Court order, the government must ensure internal reservation before proceeding with any large scale recruitment. Making appointments without it would be unfair and unacceptable, they said.

The protesters also urged ministers and MLAs from their community to put pressure on the government to protect the existing reservation system. They alleged that certain leaders are attempting to weaken the provision earned through years of continuous protests.

Among their key demands were filling all 56,000 posts by strictly following internal reservation, ensuring six percent quota for the Madiga community in jobs, withdrawing cases filed against reservation activists, setting up a permanent commission, and providing ₹2,000 crore grant to development corporations working for the community.

The protest continued for several hours as leaders warned that the agitation would intensify if their demands are ignored.

CIVIC SPORTS CELEBRATION

Sports meet boosts civic workers morale

RAMANAGARA

A sports meet organized for municipal staff and civic workers brought cheer and encouragement to employees in Ramanagar on the occasion of Civic Workers Day. Municipal Chairman K. Sheshadri said such events help workers stay physically fit and mentally strong while handling the pressure of daily duties.

He spoke after distributing prizes to the winners at a function held in the municipal premises on Wednesday. Sheshadri said civic workers play a vital role in keeping the city clean and healthy. Their work often involves stress and heavy responsibility. Sports and cultural activities, he added, provide relief and improve teamwork among staff.

The sports meet saw enthusiastic participation from municipal officials, staff and civic workers. Several competitions were held, and winners were honoured with prizes.

Sheshadri said that next year's event would be organized in separate categories, with more focus on cultural programmes and special features to make the celebration grander.

Municipal Commissioner Dr. Jayanna said Civic Workers Day is like an annual celebration for the Municipal Council. He noted that employees work under constant pressure and face daily challenges. Encouraging them to take part in sports helps maintain good health and reduces stress. He assured that the council would continue to celebrate the day in a more meaningful manner in the future.

Vice President Girijamma, council members and union representatives were present at the programme. Many staff members expressed happiness over the initiative and said such events strengthen unity and motivation among workers.

QUICK READ

Second PUC exams see strong student attendance

Mangaluru

Students turned out in good numbers for the Second PUC exams in the district on Wednesday. All 15 students attended the Urdu exam, while 3,384 students appeared for Sanskrit, with 7 absent. The French exam saw 245 students present and 1 absent, according to the Department of Pre-University Education. District Incharge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao also visited the site of a new bridge under construction on Ballalbagh Main Road, costing around Rs 2 crore. Legislative Council member Ivan D'Souza accompanied him during the inspection, highlighting development alongside academics.

State Women's Chairperson begins Dakshina Kannada Tour

Mangaluru

Dr. Nagalakshmi Chaudhary, Chairperson of the Karnataka State Women's Commission, will tour Dakshina Kannada from March 5 to 7, engaging with students, women workers, and officials. On March 5, she will visit Balmatha Women's College, State Bank Fish Market, Bantwal Women's Comfort Center, Bantwal Taluk Hospital, and Puttur Women's Police Station. March 6 includes hospital visits, a training program at Ambedkar Bhavan, and International Women's Day celebrations at Kasturba Medical College. On March 7, she will attend the Mahila Spandana program and a press conference before leaving for Bangalore, highlighting women's welfare initiatives across the district.

Organ donation awareness program held in Tengali

Dr. Sivananda Hoogara urged organ and body donation, highlighting benefits for medical education, blind patients, and society

KALABURAGI

An "Organ Donation Awareness" program was organized in Tengali village of Kalagi taluk to mark the commemoration of former Zilla Panchayat member Lingayat Shivasharanappa Andagi. The event was arranged by the Andagi Foundation with the aim of spreading awareness about donating organs and making life meaningful even after death.

Speaking at the program, Dr. Sivananda Hoogara, President of the National Organ Donation Awareness Committee, urged people to donate their organs instead of allowing the body to be destroyed after death. He said that donating the body for medical education would help students learn and serve society better. Eye donation, he added, can bring light into the lives of the blind and give hope to many families.

Dr. Hoogara stressed that organ donation can save several lives and encouraged families to respect the final wishes of those who register for donation. He said death should not be seen as an end, but as an opportunity to help others.

Scientist Prof. B.A. Patil, who has registered for organ donation, also addressed the gathering. He said it is the responsibility of the present generation to make such noble acts meaningful and inspire others to follow.

In his introductory speech, Andagi Foundation President Shivraj Andagi said the program aimed to educate elders and community members about serving society even after death.

Several local leaders and villagers attended the event. Dr. Hoogara and Prof. Patil were felicitated during the program in recognition of their efforts to promote organ donation awareness.

Former MLA urges road plan to save school building

After protests against school demolition, AEE Roopa HR visited, directing officials to preserve the building while proposed roads enhance connectivity to Shabbir Nagar and nearby colleges

HUNSUR

Former MLA H.P. Manjunath has urged highway engineers to protect the Kalkunike Government School building while widening the Hunsur Bypass Highway. He also recommended constructing an underpass near Court Circle and a connecting road from the old Mysore Road near the layout opposite ITI College.

Following protests from parents and former students against the demolition of the school, AEE Roopa HR of the National Highways Department visited the site. Officials were instructed to ensure that the school building is preserved at all costs. The proposed new roads will improve connectivity to Shabbir Nagar, ITI College, Devaraja Ursu College near Ursu Circle, and Talent School.

Deputy Engineer Syed Tabasum Lokesh, former municipal council member Syed Yunus, and local leaders Imran, Basavaraj, Anand, Chandrashekhar, Raghu, and Kumar were present during the inspection. Authorities said work will begin after finalizing designs to save the school while improving traffic flow.

Swamigal said successive MLAs, including H.P. Manjunath, S.P. Manjunath, H. Vishwanath, and G.D. Harish Gowda, discussed the issue, but no decision was made

Hunsur Ashraya beneficiaries await sites for years

HUNSUR

Serious allegations have been raised over the long delay in providing house sites to 870 beneficiaries under the Ashraya Yojana in Hunsur town. Taluk Civil Welfare Committee President Swamigal said the beneficiaries, who received title deeds nearly 22 years ago, are still waiting for possession of land in Vijayanagara Layout on Ratnapuri Road.

Former Hunsur MLA V. Papanna had distributed land titles during 2004-2005 through the Ashraya Samiti for landless families belonging to backward and weaker sections. However, despite several meetings over the years, sites have not been handed over.

Swamigal told reporters at the Journalists' Association office that meetings were held by successive MLAs including H. P. Manjunath, S. P. Manjunath, H. Vishwanath and G. D. Harish Gowda between 2009 and 2024 to discuss the issue. Yet, no final decision has been implemented.

He clarified that the land was purchased decades ago using municipal public revenue funds, not from personal or government grants of any MLA. The beneficiaries were issued rights certificates after due approval, and reviewing the list now without reason would be unjust, he said.

Vice President Intak Raju warned that if authorities fail to act from a social justice perspective, the committee will intensify its protest. Committee members stated they have documented all 870 certificate numbers and are prepared for further action to secure justice for the landless families.

Madiga leader urges internal reservation in recruitment

CHINCHOLI

Madiga community leader Akash Koollor has demanded strict implementation of internal reservation in the recruitment of 56,432 vacant government posts, warning that neglecting it would betray decades of struggle.

Addressing reporters in Chincholi, Koollor recalled that the Madiga community has been fighting for internal reservation for the past 35 years. "Following the Supreme Court verdict, the state government must now apply internal reservation scientifically and strictly according to the new roster system," he said.

Koollor emphasized that proper implementation is the only way to ensure justice for the community. "If the Congress-led government ignores internal reservation in filling these posts, it will be a huge betrayal. We cannot remain silent if injustice continues," he added, warning of statewide protests if their demands are ignored.

He noted that the government is currently filling backlog and new vacancies across various departments, making it the right time to ensure internal reservation. "Only through careful application of reservation can the hard-fought rights of our community be protected," Koollor said.

The meeting was attended by other community leaders, including Pradeep Maitri and Machendra Serikar, who supported the call for fair recruitment practices. The leaders stressed that the Madiga community will continue to press for equality and representation until internal reservation is properly enforced in all government employment.

Dalit group demands larger fair budget share

KALABURAGI

Members of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti staged a protest in front of the District Collector's office on Wednesday, demanding that 24.1 percent of the State budget be set aside for Dalits. The organization, founded by Lakshminarayana Nagawara, said the allocation should match the community's population share and be clearly shown in government accounts.

After the dharna, leaders submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah through the District Collector. They reminded him that their members had strongly supported the Congress in the 2023 Assembly elections believing in his promise of social justice.

Protesters said the government must remove confusion over roster points in internal reservation and ensure fair recruitment for all 101 Scheduled Castes. They also sought better facilities in hostels, including enough furniture and study materials for students. In addition, they demanded that cemetery land be reserved for Dalits in every village.

The group urged the State to raise the income limit for SC/ST reservation to fifteen lakh rupees per year, saying many poor families are left out under current rules. They further appealed for equal opportunities in priesthood and civil services, stating that dignity and representation are essential for true development.

Several district and taluk leaders, along with student activists, joined the protest and expressed hope that the government would respond positively to their long-standing demands. Community elders said the protest was peaceful and aimed at reminding the State of its duty to protect vulnerable sections. They added that proper budget support would improve education, housing, and jobs for future generations. Now they await clear action. Leaders said they will continue dialogue until justice is delivered fully. Statewide support.

Lawyers' Welfare: M.A. Mulla makes big promise

CHINCHOLI

Mohammed Sa A. Mulla, popularly known as M.A. Mulla, who is contesting in the State Bar Council elections, has promised to work for the welfare of lawyers in the state. Speaking to lawyer voters at the Chincholi town court premises, Mulla said that lawyers are an essential part of the judicial system but often face difficulties and lack proper government support.

Mulla outlined his plans to provide safety and financial security to lawyers and their families. He said that in case of any disaster, the families of lawyers would receive ₹10 lakh as insurance and ₹10 lakh as compensation. He also said he would request the Karnataka State Bar Council to secure a government grant of ₹20 crore every year to support lawyers across the state.

He pointed out that lawyers in smaller towns and taluks face more problems compared to those in Bengaluru and promised to focus on giving them the necessary facilities to work comfortably.

Senior lawyers, including Shivasharanappa Japatti, Srimantha Kattimani, Chandrashekhar Malasa, Suryakant Chincholikar, Mallikarjuna Kotapalli, and Suryakant Garampalli, attended the meeting and welcomed Mulla's proposals.

Mulla expressed that his goal is to ensure that lawyers feel secure, supported, and appreciated for their work. He urged lawyers to trust him and said he would strive to improve their working conditions, making justice accessible and easier for everyone.

Farmers complain over low-capacity transformers

HATTI

Farmers in Nilogal village are facing major losses due to repeated transformer failures, alleging negligence by the electricity department. According to the farmers, low-capacity transformers have been installed, which burn frequently and disrupt irrigation, causing crops to dry and yields to drop. For several days after each transformer burned, pump sets could not operate, worsening the situation. Farmers claim this is leading to significant financial losses. They also stated that every time a transformer is replaced, they are charged Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000, adding to their burden.

During a petition submitted to the Gulbarga Electricity Supply Department branch officer in Hatti on Tuesday, farmers demanded that transformers of at least 100 kV capacity be installed immediately to prevent recurring problems. They urged authorities to ensure that any burned transformer is replaced within 24 hours and called for a permanent solution to safeguard agricultural activities.

Ramesh Veerapur, Taluk Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), warned that a sit-in protest would be organized in front of the department office if the issues are not resolved promptly. Farmers present at the petition included Nagaraj, Amarappa, Hussain Saab, Sharanabasava, Hamid, Gowdappa Gowda, Yankanna, Malakaraddi, Allahabhaksha, and Rangappa.

The farmers hope that immediate action from authorities will prevent further damage and financial loss.

KNOWLEDGE FOR WELLNESS

Women urged to prioritise health awareness

CHITRADURGA

Government Arts College Principal Dr. J. Kariappa Malige said many women today are facing serious health problems due to lack of awareness and growing social and economic pressures. He was speaking after inaugurating a Women's Health Awareness programme organized by the college's Women's Unit and IQAC at Ambedkar Hall on Wednesday.

Dr. Malige noted that nearly half of women suffer from various physical and mental health issues. He said ignorance about health is often the main reason for many diseases. He advised girl students not to hide their problems out of fear or hesitation, but to openly consult doctors and seek proper medical guidance.

Basaveshwara Medical College gynecologist Dr. Soumya delivered a detailed talk on women's health. She explained that certain cancers, including uterine and breast cancer, are linked to lifestyle habits. She informed students that preventive vaccines are available and encouraged them and faculty members to make use of these facilities.

Dr. Soumya also stressed the importance of daily exercise, walking and healthy food habits to prevent diseases. She gave practical guidance on menstrual hygiene, hormonal changes and the correct use of sanitary pads. She urged young women to maintain cleanliness and pay attention to early symptoms of health problems.

The programme was attended by faculty members and coordinators of various college committees. Students actively participated in the interactive session and clarified their doubts, making the event informative and meaningful.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SHRUTI MONDKAR,** Resident of 1st Block 302, Vaishnavi Rathnam Apts, 2nd Floor, S M Road, Near Ayappa Temple T Dasarahalli , Bengaluru -560 057 have changed my name to **SHRUTI NIKHIL MONDKAR,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 04.03.2026 before notary R.BASAVARAJA Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **RAJASHEKHAR HIREMATH** S/O RUDRAYYA, R/@ Shri Laxmi Ranganath Nilaya Near Hodlur, House, 7th Main Road, Vidyagiri, Bagalkot District, Karnataka - 587102. I have changed my name from **RUDRAYYA to RAJASHEKHAR HIREMATH** for all the purpose. Sworn before **P.V Ramachandrareddy,** Advocate & Notary, Chickballapura Vide affidavit Dated: 25 Feb 2026

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **HEMAVATHY** (Old Name), D/o Muniraj, aged 47 years, residing at No.168, Murugan Temple Road, Doddanagar, Near Murugan Temple, R.T.Nagar, Bangalore – 560032 hereby declare that henceforth I shall be known and identified only as **V.HEMAVATHY** for all purposes, records, and future transactions as sworn before Advocate & Notary Puttaramaiah, City Civil Court Complex, Bengaluru – 560009 dated 28.02.2026.

NAME CHANGE

I, **NIKHIL CHANDRAKANT MONDKAR,** Resident of 1st Block 302, Vaishnavi Rathnam Apts, 2nd Floor, S M Road, Near Ayappa Temple T Dasarahalli , Bengaluru -560 057 have changed my minor son name from **AKSHAJ NIKHIL MONDKAR** to **AKSHAJ MONDKAR,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 04.03.2026 before notary R.BASAVARAJA Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **NIKHIL MONDKAR,** Resident of 1st Block 302, Vaishnavi Rathnam Apts, 2nd Floor, S M Road, Near Ayappa Temple T Dasarahalli , Bengaluru -560 057, have changed my name to **NIKHIL CHANDRAKANT MONDKAR,** Vide Affidavit Dated: 04.03.2026 before notary R.BASAVARAJA Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Swapna Mallapureddi W/o Venkatasudarsan Payasam, Residing at No- 126 S V Enclave Flat No- 305 8th Main Puttenahalli Near Shani Mahatama Temple Jp Nagar 7th Phase Bangalore karnataka- 560078, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Swapna Payasam.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

NAME CHANGE

I, **STALIN**, S/o Raju, resident of No. 184, 3rd Floor. 3rd Main, 11th Cross, Padmeshwari Nagar, Kithaganur, Bengalure-560049, have changed my name to **STALIN RAJU**, vide affidavit dated: 04.06.2026, before Notary MEER HASSAN, Bangalore

QUICK READ

CEO's office recommends punishment for some EROs, AEROs

KOLKATA

The office of the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has sent a detailed report to the Election Commission of India headquarters in New Delhi highlighting deliberate performance derelictions on the part of a section of electoral registration officers (EROs) and assistant electoral registration officers (AEROs) during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in the state. The CEO's office has recommended disciplinary action for EROS and AEROs found guilty of deliberate dereliction, while maintaining that the Commission will ultimately decide on this count.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta celebrates Holi at her residence

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday celebrated the festival of Holi at her residence and extended warm greetings to the people of the national capital. Earlier in the day, the CM took to X to convey her wishes. "Heartiest greetings to all of you on this auspicious occasion of Holi. May this festival of colours bring new hope, new enthusiasm, and prosperity to your lives. A developed Delhi is one where celebrations also become a medium of empowerment," she wrote. Highlighting her government's focus on women's empowerment, the Chief Minister said.

Guj targets 5.50 lakh girls in statewide HPV vaccination drive

National data indicate that one woman in India is diagnosed with cervical cancer every four minutes and 12 sec

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat has set a target of vaccinating 5.50 lakh adolescent girls against cervical cancer under a statewide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation campaign launched from Ahmedabad, following the national roll-out announced last week.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the nationwide drive on February 28 in Rajasthan.

The Gujarat leg of the campaign was formally launched at Sola Civil Hospital by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in the presence of Health Minister Praful Pansheriya.

Health officials said the campaign is aimed at protecting 14-year-old girls from cervical cancer, which is the second most common cancer among Indian women and accounts for around 17.7 per cent of cases.

National data indicate that one woman in India is diagnosed with cervical cancer every four minutes and 12 seconds, and one dies from the disease every seven minutes.

Nearly 70 to 75 per cent of patients are diagnosed at the second or third stage, and the disease remains a leading cause of death among women aged 30 to 69 years.

In 2022, India recorded an estimated 1,27,526 new cases and 79,906 deaths linked to cervical cancer. Gujarat reported 4,928 new cases and 1,781 deaths during the same period.

Experts at the Gujarat Cancer Research Institute (GCRI) said concerns and misinformation surrounding the HPV vaccine are unfounded.

They stated that the vaccine is safe and effective in preventing infection from high-risk HPV types 16 and 18, which are responsible for the majority of cervical cancer cases.

Doctors explained that persistent HPV infection can develop into Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN) over 10 to 20 years and may eventually progress to invasive cancer, making early vaccination a critical preventive measure.

Rahul Gandhi celebrates Holi with Congmen at AICC HQ

"Happy Holi. Sabko pyaar bhari, nafrat mitaane wali Holi," he said, expressing hope that the festival helps remove hatred and strengthens bonds among people.

NEW DELHI

The premises of the AICC headquarters came alive with colours and festive greetings as senior party leaders, office-bearers and supporters gathered to celebrate the festival of colours. Rahul Gandhi joined the gathering, interacting with party workers and exchanging Holi greetings with those present.

Extending his wishes on social media, Gandhi posted a message on X, expressing hope that the festival would bring happiness and positivity to everyone. "Heartfelt Holi greetings to all of you on the festival of colours and love. May the colours of Holi fill all your lives with new hopes, fresh enthusiasm, and countless joys," he wrote.

Several Congress leaders present at the event welcomed Gandhi's participation and highlighted the importance of celebrating festivals together with party workers.

Supriya Shrinate said Holi represents joy and celebration and expressed happiness over Gandhi joining the festivities.

"Holi is a festival of joy, happiness and celebration. We are all excited that Rahul Gandhi is here today to celebrate Holi with us.

Mukul Wasnik also praised Gandhi's presence at the celebration, noting that despite holding an important national position, he continues to engage with party workers during cultural events. According to Wasnik, such gestures strengthen the bond between leadership and grassroots workers. Sachin Pilot emphasized the deeper meaning of the festival, describing Holi as a celebration of love and brotherhood.

He said the occasion should inspire people to come together and spread happiness across society.

Meanwhile, Rajeev Shukla said party members were enjoying the festive atmosphere at the headquarters.

The Holi celebrations at the Congress headquarters highlighted the party's attempt to reinforce a sense of unity and collective spirit among its members while marking one of India's most widely celebrated festivals.

Rajnath Singh, Nadda extend greetings for peace, harmony

NEW DELHI

During the celebrations, Rajnath Singh interacted with visitors and conveyed his Holi wishes to people across the nation. Speaking to IANS, the Defence Minister said the festival symbolises joy and unity and expressed hope for global peace.

On the auspicious occasion of Holi, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all countrymen. May peace be established across the world," Singh said.

Earlier in the day, he also shared a message on X, highlighting the spirit of the festival. In his post, he wished that Holi would bring happiness, good health, prosperity and renewed enthusiasm into people's lives.

Singh also emphasised that the festival of colours plays an important role in strengthening bonds of unity, harmony and brotherhood in society. He encouraged citizens to celebrate Holi safely while keeping environmental considerations in mind, including the use of natural colours and traditional practices.

Meanwhile, Health Minister JP Nadda celebrated the festival at his residence along with party leaders, workers and supporters.

'Phool Holi' celebrated with devotion at Kashi Vishwanath Dham

VARANASI

The flower-based Holi festivities were held at Shankaracharya Chowk within the temple complex, where large numbers of devotees gathered to take part in the celebrations.

Instead of coloured powders, flowers were showered on participants, creating a vibrant yet environmentally friendly celebration.

Temple authorities said the event was designed to preserve traditional customs while promoting safe and eco-conscious celebrations. Apart from the showering of flowers, the programme also featured a series of cultural performances, including devotional songs, bhajans and traditional Holi melodies that enhanced the festive mood.

According to officials, the celebrations were organised with the cooperation of temple authorities, local police and other agencies to ensure the event remained peaceful and orderly. Devotees were also urged to maintain decorum and cooperate with authorities during the festivities.

Temple Chief Executive Officer Vishwabhushan Mishra said the temple trust had arranged a special five-tier floral setup for the occasion. "Today, Holi was performed at Baba's temple.

TN BJP lambasts Cong-DMK allies over protests

CHENNAI

In a statement, Tamil Nadu BJP spokesperson A. N. S. Prasad alleged that demonstrations held on March 1 and 2 mourning Khamenei—who was reportedly killed in joint strikes by the United States and Israel on February 28—reflected a political agenda that undermined India's national interests.

Prasad said some protest groups attempted to march towards the United States Consulate General Chennai during the visit of Narendra Modi to the state. According to him, such actions were irresponsible and risked disturbing public order.

The BJP leader further argued that demonstrations targeting foreign diplomatic missions were inappropriate and could negatively affect India's global image.

He also criticised statements made by Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, claiming their remarks questioned the Indian government's stance on developments in West Asia.

Prasad said such comments were politically motivated and could weaken national unity at a time when the government is prioritising the safety of Indian citizens in the conflict-hit region.

Vinod Tawde, Athawale feature in Maha BJP list

MUMBAI

The BJP on Wednesday announced its four candidates from Maharashtra for the upcoming Rajya Sabha biennial elections.

The party has strategically focussed on organizational influence and "social engineering."

The most notable name on the list is Vinod Tawde, the BJP National General Secretary and Bihar incharge. This nomination marks Tawde's return to active parliamentary politics after being away from the legislative fray since 2019. Alongside Tawde, the party has renominated Ramdas Athawale, the National President of the RPI (Athawale) faction and sitting Union Minister of State. The other two candidates include Maya Chintaman Ivnate, a tribal leader, former mayor of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation and Ramrao Wadkute who hails from Dhangar community from Hingoli district. Political analysts suggest that the BJP has carefully curated this list to appeal to diverse demographics and regions.

Kerala CPI-M gears up for crucial candidate finalisation

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's ruling Communist Party of India-Marxist enters a decisive phase this week as its State Secretariat and Committee convene on Thursday and Friday to finalise candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections.

According to a senior party leader who spoke on condition of anonymity, the two-day deliberations will produce a draft list that will be forwarded to the 14 district committees for discussions at various organisational levels. The feedback will then return to the State Committee for ratification, paving the way for an official announcement by state Secretary M.V. Govindan early next week. Candidate selection, party sources said, follows a calibrated strategy balancing winnability, organisational discipline, and leadership renewal. In constituencies considered a "sure shot" for the party, the CPI-M has largely adhered to a two-term norm to facilitate generational change. This approach previously saw the induction of A. N. Shamseer from Thalassery, long regarded as the political bastion of former state Secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan.

Bengaluru South Zilla Panchayat
Office of the Executive Engineer
PANCHAYATHRAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION
Ramanagara, Bangalore South Dist.

No. EE/PRED/RMG/JE/TND-38/2025-26 Date: 03.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Only through E-PROCUREMENT system)

The Executive Engineer, Panchayathraj Engineering Division, Ramanagara invites the Itemwise tender. Contractors registered in KPWD, enrolled in PRED/PWD for the works under different Head of Account. Tender amount **Rs.110.00 lakh**, Last Date for submission of Tender **Dated: 11-03-2026 by 4.00 PM**, Opening of the Tenchical Tender **Dated: 12-03-2026 at 4.30 PM.** Opening of the Financical Tender **Dated: 16-03-2026 at 4.30 PM.** onwards. For details & further information visit the website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact this office in office hours.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Panchayathraj Engineering Division

DIPR/BSD/675/SA/2025-26

ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು (ಪೂರ್ವ)ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಸಯ್ಯಾಜಿ ರಾವ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ,
ಮೈಸೂರು-570024 ಇ-ಮೇಲ್:eewmccmys@gmail.com, eeemccmys@gmail.com

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಹೆಚ್1/ಪವಿ/101/2022-2023 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27.02.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್ ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ವಿವಿಧ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ವಿವರ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

Tender	No of Works	Amount	Tender published	Tender Open
EOI	02	NA	25.02.2026 to 05.03.2026	06.03.2026
Service Tender	01 to 06	170.17	02.03.2026 to 10.03.2026	11.03.2026

ಸೂಚನೆ:ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮತ್ತು **Expression of Intrest** ಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು (ಪೂರ್ವ/ ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ) ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಕಚೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಯಾವುದೇ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ/ ದಿನಾಂಕ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವುದು, ಪ್ರತ್ಯೇಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು
ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು.

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಮೈಸೂರು/1785/ತಿರಡಿ ಸಾಯಿ/2025-26

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರ
ಪಟ್ಟಣ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ ಖಾನಾಪೂರ
ತಾ॥ಖಾನಾಪೂರ ಜಿ॥ಬೆಳಗಾವಿ
Town Panchayat, KHANAPUR
Tal : Khanapur & Dist : Belagavi
ಕಚೇರಿ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08336-222240 E Mail:itstaff_ulb_khanapur@yahoo.com

SL/TPK/SBM 2.0/Labour/2025-26/ Date:04.03.2026

Publication of ReTender Notification
Only through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal
(Karnataka Transparency Act 1999 Act 2000 w.e.f.)

SBM 2.0 Grant & TP Khanapur General Fund, KC-6 and KW-01 for **1) DMA/2025-26/SE7418 2)DMA/2025-26/SE7419 3)DMA/2025-26/SE7420 4)DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT55883**, during the under Khanapur Pattana Panchayat. 04 Tender are invited for minimum **2.16 lakh** maximum **58.97 lakh** works tendered. More details can befound at **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** Last date for submission of tenders: **18-03-2026 upto 17:00 hrs**. For more information contact Technical Branch of Khanapur Town Panchayat and tender payment as per conditions.

Sd/- Chief Officer **Sd/-Administrator**
TP Khanapur **TP Khanapur**
DIPR/BGM/1985/DeshpandePublicity/2025-26

ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

ನಂ:ದಾಮಪಾ:ಕಾಅ3:ಇ.ಟೆಂಡರ್:23:2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:03.03.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

(ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ)

2025-26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಎಸ್.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ ಮುಕ್ತನಿಧಿಯ ಟಿ.ಎಸ್.ಪಿ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಉಳಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನ- 01 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್ , ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಿದಿಯ ಶೇ 24.10 ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಸಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಉಳಿಕೆ - 02 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್, ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಿದಿಯ ಶೇ 7.25 ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಸಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಉಳಿಕೆ, - 01 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್,ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಿದಿಯ ಶೇ 5.00 ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಸಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಉಳಿಕೆ - 01 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್, 2025-26 ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಿದಿ- 03 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್, 2025-26 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಎಂಟರ್ ಪ್ರೈಸ್ (ಮಳಿಗೆ) ನಿಧಿ- 01 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಸಿಂಗಲ್/ ಡಬಲ್ ಕವರ್ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು (ವಿದ್ಯುತ್/ ನೀರುಸರಬರಾಜು) ರವರು ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ/ ಪೂರ್ಣಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದ್ದು, ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು/ ಏಜನ್ಸಿದಾರರು/ ಸರಬರಾಜುದಾರರು ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಾಗಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಛೇರಿ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ಶಾಖೆಗೆ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಸಹಾಯಕ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192 234444 ರಿಂದ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಸೂಚನೆ : 1) ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ಮುಂದೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಿದ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ಹಾಗೂ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಿಟ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಮೂದಿಸಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಿಟ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತವು ಅಂತಿಮವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. 2) ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ ಅದಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳನ್ನು ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಗಮನಿಸುವುದು ಹಾಗೂ ಯಾವುದೇ ಪ್ರತ್ಯೇಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 11.03.2026 ಸಮಯ: 17.00 ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 12.03.2026 ಸಮಯ 17.30 ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೇಳೆ : 16.03.2026 ಸಮಯ : 11.00 ನಂತರ

ವಾಸಾಇ/ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ/795/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025-26

ಸಹಿ/-ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು,
ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer (QA/QC), Zone-1,
Amurthahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru-92.
No: BNCC/EE/(QA/QC)/TEND/07/2025-26 Date:04-03-2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System)

(Through **GOK** KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** only)

The Executive Engineer, Quality Assurance/Quality Control division, Zone-1, invites Request for Proposal on behalf of Commissioner, Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) from interested persons/firms those who have done similar type of work for **Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC)** for the below works through KPP portal by the Executive Engineer QA/QC Division, Zone -1, BNCC.

Sl No.	Name of the work
1.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Improvements to roads and drains at Janakiram Layout "A" and "B" block in **Ward No-83** Subbaiahanapalya **Project Cost: ₹.200.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.1.61 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**
2.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads and drains at Andhra Colony Ward No -81 and Pillareddy Nagar near Ambedkar Bhavan in **Ward No-82** Banasawadi **Project Cost: ₹.200.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.1.61 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**
3.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads and drains at A.K.Colony Main road, Hennur Village, Ponnappa Layout and Surrounding areas in **Ward no-76** Hennur **Project Cost: ₹.300.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.2.38 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**
4.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads in Nagawara A.K.Colony surrounding area in Ward No-77 & Samadhananagara in **Ward No-78** HBR Layout **Project Cost: ₹.200.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.1.61 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**
5.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads drains in Veerannapalya in **Ward No-77** and Basavanagar surrounding area in **Ward No-78** HBR Layout **Project Cost: ₹.200.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.1.61 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**
6.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads and drains in Banasawadi and Kammanahalli surrounding areas in **Ward No-82 & 81** of Sarvajnanagar Division **Project Cost: ₹.500.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.4.03 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,500.00**
7.	Consultancy Services for Project Management including Supervision, Quality control (PMC) for Comprehensive development of roads and drains in HBR Layout, Hennur and Nagawara surrounding areas in **Ward No-76, 78 & 77** of Sarvajnanagar Division **Project Cost: ₹.500.00 Lakhs, PMC Amount Reserved: ₹.4.03 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹.10,000.00**

Calendar of Events : (1) Pre-Bid Meeting on **09-03-2026** at **11:30** am. (2) Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders is **13-03-2026** upto **4:00** pm. (3) Opening of Technical Bid is **16-03-2026** at **11:00** am.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
QA/QC Division, Zone-1 BNCC

QUICK READ

KITTS
Kerala Institute of Tourism & Travel Studies

Kerala travel institute starts training prog for TN tourism officials

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a significant inter-state collaboration, the Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), the human resource development arm of Kerala's Tourism Department, has launched a comprehensive training programme for tourism officials from Tamil Nadu, focusing on Kerala's sustainable and innovative tourism models. The programme, inaugurated online by Tourism and Public Works Minister P. A. Mohamed Riyas at the KITTS campus here, will train 60 Tourism Information Officers from Tamil Nadu serving at the state and district levels. Conducted in two batches, the first session began on Wednesday, with the second scheduled from March 10 to March 12.

Special cell to find missing women in state: Maharashtra CM

MUMBAI

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday announced in the legislative council that the state government has formed a special cell to search for missing women in Maharashtra, with Additional Director General (ADG)- level women officers appointed to head it. The cell will focus on planning and implementation of search operations. He informed that the number of women found in the last year has increased by 10 per cent due to the work done by this special cell during the Question Hour in the Legislative Council. Niranjan Davkhare raised a question, while Bhai Jagtap raised a sub-question.

Maha govt abolishes non-agricultural tax for housing societies

MUMBAI

In a landmark decision providing significant financial relief to urban residents, the Maharashtra government has announced the total abolition of the Non-Agricultural (NA) tax for housing societies. Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Wednesday confirmed in the Legislative Assembly that all past, present, and future NA tax levies, including outstanding arrears, have been waived. The announcement came during the Question Hour of the Budget Session, in response to a query raised by MLA Bhimrao Tapkir regarding the tax burden on urban housing complexes. Minister Bawankule told the house that the annual NA tax is completely scrapped for all residential constructions, regardless of age.

'Matsya Shakti' project to empower coastal minority communities: Min

Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Minority Affairs George Kurian on Wed launched 'Matsya Shakti' training programme for coastal minority fishers in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Union Minister was speaking while inaugurating a training-cum-awareness programme under the Matsya Shakti initiative at the Vizhinjam Regional Centre of the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

He highlighted that the programme aims to strengthen the socio-economic condition of minority fisher communities by equipping them with modern skills and sustainable livelihood opportunities in the fisheries sector.

According to Kurian, the Matsya Shakti project is designed to benefit around 690 individuals, making it one of the largest targeted skill development initiatives for minority fisher communities in the district. The programme seeks to promote entrepreneurship, improve technical knowledge, and create employment opportunities through fisheries and mariculture activities.

As part of the initiative, 90 participants are currently undergoing a 40-day intensive training programme to become hatchery production workers. The course provides comprehensive practical and theoretical knowledge on various aspects of hatchery operations. The curriculum includes broodstock management, artificial breeding techniques, larval rearing practices, feed and water quality management, hatchery hygiene, and biosecurity protocols.

In addition, 180 beneficiaries will receive hands-on training in cage culture fish farming. The training programme focuses on sustainable mariculture practices, enabling participants to adopt modern and environmentally responsible fish farming techniques that can enhance productivity and profitability.

A major highlight of the Matsya Shakti initiative is its strong emphasis on women's empowerment. As part of the programme, 420 women will undergo exclusive leadership development training aimed at strengthening their role in community development and economic activities.

The training modules for women include communication skills, financial literacy, entrepreneurship development, awareness of government welfare schemes, and strategies for collective action and leadership.

During his interaction with the trainees, Kurian encouraged them to utilise the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and community leaders who can generate employment and contribute to the local economy.

On the occasion, the Minister also distributed fish seeds of Giant Trevally, a high-value edible species, and Bluefin Watchman Goby, an ornamental fish, to farmers.

He also released informative brochures detailing the cultivation potential and economic benefits of these species, highlighting their role in promoting sustainable fisheries and enhancing incomes for coastal communities.

Omar meets offers prayers for lives lost in Iran conflict in Srinagar

SRINAGAR

According to an official statement from the Chief Minister's Office, Omar Abdullah met religious leaders and members of civil society in Srinagar in view of the escalating situation in West Asia.

During the interaction, participants expressed deep concern over the ongoing conflict and conveyed their condolences over the loss of lives in Iran.The Chief Minister stressed the importance of maintaining peace, harmony, and stability in Jammu and Kashmir during such sensitive times. He urged people to respect public sentiments while ensuring that expressions of grief and mourning remain peaceful and responsible.

The Chief Minister today interacted with religious leaders and members of civil society in Srinagar in light of recent developments in West Asia. The participants expressed concern over the situation and conveyed their condolences over the loss of lives in Iran, the statement said.

This marks the first interaction between Omar Abdullah and civil society members in Kashmir since the United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran, a development that has sparked widespread concern across the region.

Several prominent figures attended the meeting, including religious leaders, social activists, and representatives from business and trade communities. The participants discussed the evolving situation in West Asia and its potential implications.

Earlier, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had strongly condemned the attacks on Iran, asserting that the right to determine a change of regime lies solely with the people of Iran and not with external powers. He reiterated that international conflicts should not undermine the sovereignty of nations.

The Chief Minister has also been closely monitoring the safety of Kashmiri students currently studying in Iran. He has been in constant contact with the Ministry of External Affairs to ensure their safe return to India amid the escalating tensions.

TVK leader promises farm loan waiver at Thanjavur meet

THANJAVUR

Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) leader Vijay on Wednesday made an emotional appeal to party cadres while unveiling a fresh set of election promises at an executive meeting and campaign programme held at Chengipatti in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district.

Addressing TVK executives and campaign volunteers, Vijay urged supporters to give him an opportunity to establish a corruption-free and socially just government in Tamil Nadu.

Vijay urged supporters to give him an opportunity to establish a corruption-free and socially just government in Tamil Nadu.

This relationship with the people is not something that came for the sake of elections. It happened naturally. For some, politics may be a choice during elections, but for me and those who support me, it is deeply emotional, he said.

During the meeting, Vijay also announced the second phase of his party's election promises, after earlier unveiling the first phase in Vellore.

A key highlight of the announcement was a major relief proposal for farmers.

Vijay said that if TVK forms the government, crop loans taken by farmers owning up to five acres of land from cooperative agricultural banks would be completely waived. For farmers owning more than five acres, the party would examine the possibility of waiving up to 50 per cent of their crop loans.

Our government will ensure that delta farmers never face a shortage of fertilisers, Vijay said, emphasising that the party would stand firmly with the farming community and reject any scheme that harms farmers, even if pressure comes from the Union government.

He also announced that the government would bear the entire educational expenses of children from landless families and farmers owning up to two acres of land, provided no member of the family is employed in the state or Central government.

Highlighting issues in agricultural procurement, Vijay said his government would ensure that paddy stored in procurement centres is properly protected and not allowed to sprout and go to waste.

Adequate storage infrastructure would be created, and strict action would be taken if commissions are illegally collected for loading or unloading paddy bags.

Tawde thanks BJP leadership after RS nomination, vows dedicated service

NEW DELHI

In a post on his official X handle, Vinod Tawde conveyed his appreciation to the BJP's top leadership for placing their trust in him. Infinite thanks and gratitude! I sincerely thank the senior leadership and the Central Election Committee for selecting me as a Rajya Sabha candidate, he wrote.

Tawde also highlighted the guidance and leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP National President Nitin Nabin, stating that the party remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the national interest. He emphasized that the BJP's ideology and vision for development continue to inspire leaders and workers across the country.

The senior BJP leader also expressed special thanks to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and State BJP President Ravindra Chavan for supporting his nomination. He assured the leadership and party workers that he would fulfill the responsibility entrusted to him with complete dedication and loyalty.

Political observers see Tawde's nomination to the Rajya Sabha as recognition of his strong organizational abilities and unwavering commitment to the party. Over the years, he has played several crucial roles within the BJP, contributing significantly to strengthening the party's structure and electoral strategy.

Tawde's recent political work in Bihar is considered particularly significant. After Chief Minister Nitish Kumar exited the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2022, the BJP leadership appointed Tawde as the party's Bihar Incharge, assigning him the challenging task of rebuilding and strengthening the party's base in the politically complex state.

Under his leadership, the BJP focused on strengthening its organizational network down to the booth level. Through strategic planning, effective social outreach, and coordinated efforts with alliance partners, Tawde played a key role in consolidating the NDA's position in Bihar.

CRIME

2 killed after being struck by train in Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD

Two men were found dead near a railway track in the Naranpura area of Ahmedabad after being struck by a train during the night, the police said on Wednesday.

The bodies were discovered at around 11 a.m. near the railway track close to the Adarshnagar Police Chowki. One of the deceased has been identified as Satyajit Shrimali (50), a resident of Naranpura. The second victim is an unidentified man believed to be around 32 years old.

Local residents alerted the authorities after noticing the bodies near the railway crossing.

Personnel from the local police station and the Government Railway Police (GRP) reached the spot and initiated an inquiry. Inspector Vimal Dangar of Vadaj Police Station said preliminary findings suggest the incident occurred during the night. Prima facie, the incident appears to have occurred at night. The bodies were discovered at around 11 in the morning. He said the exact circumstances under which the two men were struck by the train remain unclear.

Bengal man ends life after finding name on adjudication category of voters list

KOLKATA

A man in Magrahat area of West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district committed suicide after he found his name under the adjudication category in the final electoral rolls of West Bengal post Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, the police said on Wednesday. According to police sources, the deceased has been identified as Rafiq Ali Ghazi, 41.

Officers of Ushti Police Station recovered the body from his house late last night with a noose around his neck. The body has been sent to Diamond Harbour Medical College and Hospital for an autopsy. The family claimed that Ghazi was in panic since the SIR notice came. After that, he submitted all the documents. He also informed the family members about it. He also went to see the final electoral rolls that came out on February 28 and was depressed since returning home.

POLITICAL TURMOIL

CPI-M leader Sudhakaran signals exit, slams party leadership for 'neglect'

ALAPPUZHA

In a strongly worded Facebook post, the 75-year-old leader accused the party leadership of sustained neglect and humiliation over the past few years. Sudhakaran said that despite his long association with the CPI-M, he had been sidelined from key activities after being shifted from the State Committee in 2022 to function merely as a branch committee member under the Alappuzha District Committee. Highlighting his decades-long association with the party, Sudhakaran noted that he has been a member of the CPI-M for 63 years and served in the State Committee for 43 years. However, he claimed that the district leadership had failed to acknowledge his contributions. According to him, the District Secretary had not enquired about his well-being even once and had excluded him from public programmes for nearly five years.

Sudhakaran also launched a direct attack on CPI-M State Secretary M. V. Govindan. He criticised remarks made by

Govindan during a recent press conference, where the latter reportedly suggested that Sudhakaran was not deserving of consideration. Calling the remark inappropriate, the veteran leader said the tone used during the media interaction amounted to mockery and was deeply hurtful.

A prominent figure in Kerala politics, Sudhakaran served as a legislator four times and held ministerial positions on two occasions. Most recently, he served as a minister in the first Pinarayi Vijayan government between 2016 and 2021.

His relationship with the party leadership has been strained since he was denied a ticket in the 2021 Kerala Assembly elections. Since then, Sudhakaran has occasionally voiced dissent against the leadership, keeping the party on edge.

Known for his blunt and straightforward style, Sudhakaran has commanded respect across political lines, with even leaders from the Congress-led Opposition acknowledging his stature.

In his Facebook post, he also pointed out that he was not invited to the 50th anniversary observance of the Emergency, despite being the only surviving leader in the district who had faced arrest, imprisonment, and assault during that period.

Meanwhile, political speculation has intensified with unconfirmed reports suggesting that Congress General Secretary and Alappuzha MP K. C. Venugopal has met Sudhakaran. If he chooses to switch sides, there are indications that the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) may field him from his home constituency of Ambalappuzha, a move that could significantly alter the political dynamics in Alappuzha district.

QUICK READ

UN alarmed by civilian toll in Pak-Afghan border clashes

Kabul

Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan echoed concerns raised by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) over the intensifying clashes along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border that have resulted in heavy civilian casualties and displacement. He called on both parties to exercise maximum restraint and adhere to International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, stressing that dialogue remains the only sustainable solution.

Echoing UNAMA's deep concerns about escalating hostilities on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.

Pakistan poverty explodes, inequality at 27-year high

Lahore

Both inequality and poverty have increased in Pakistan during the last six years, a report released by the country's Planning Commission clearly indicated. This is based on a comparison of the level and distribution of household incomes, according to the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) of 2018-19 and 2024-25, respectively, undertaken by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The worrying statistic is the rise in the incidence of national poverty from 21.9 per cent in 2018-19 to 28.9 per cent in 2024-25. Rural poverty has increased from 28.2 per cent to 36.3 per cent, while it has gone up in urban areas from 11 per cent to 17.4%t, as per a report in the Karachi-based Business Recorder.

Israel-US war tie faces test as Iran crisis widens

Israeli PM appears to have achieved a long-standing strategic objective with the killing of Khamenei in air strikes

JERUSALEM

At the start of the bombing campaign launched on Saturday, both Israel and the United States publicly signaled that regime change in Iran was a key objective.

The joint military operations escalated rapidly, culminating in Israeli airstrikes that reportedly killed Ali Khamenei and several senior members of Iran's leadership.

However, the messaging from Washington has since shifted. Speaking at the White House on Monday, President Donald Trump avoided mentioning regime change as a primary goal of the operation. Instead, he emphasized that the United States was focused on neutralizing Iran's missile capabilities, destroying parts of its naval forces, and preventing the country from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Reinforcing this stance, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth stated during a Pentagon press conference that the ongoing campaign was not intended to be a so-called regime-change war. His comments suggested that Washington's military objectives may be more limited than those being articulated by Israel.

In contrast, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has continued to openly call for political upheaval within Iran. In a televised interview with Fox News on Monday night, he urged Iranian citizens to rise up against their government. Netanyahu said the military campaign would help create conditions that could allow the Iranian people to get control of their destiny, signaling his continued support for the overthrow of Iran's ruling establishment.

According to a U.S. official familiar with White House discussions, the two allies may be pursuing overlapping but ultimately different objectives. Speaking anonymously to Reuters, the official said that while the United States is focused primarily on dismantling Iran's military capabilities and preventing nuclear proliferation, Israel sees regime change as a central strategic aim.

The divergence in priorities could become more significant if the conflict drags on in the coming weeks. Analysts warn that differing goals between Washington and Jerusalem may complicate coordination in the ongoing campaign and shape the future trajectory of the escalating Middle East conflict.

Mojtaba leading choice for Iran supreme leader

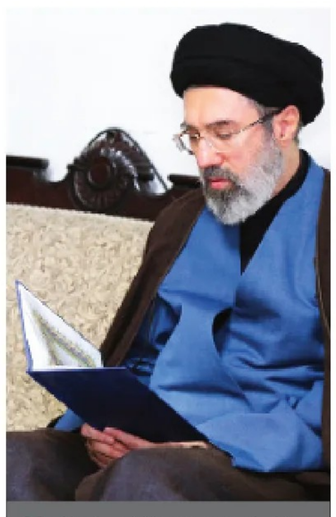
TEHRAN

According to the sources, Mojtaba Khamenei, 56, was not present in Tehran when the airstrike targeted and destroyed the Supreme Leader's compound on Saturday.

The strike reportedly killed Ali Khamenei, his wife, another son, and several senior Iranian military and leadership figures. The assassination marks the first known instance in modern history where a nation's top ruler has been killed in a direct aerial strike.

The developments have plunged Iran into uncertainty, even as discussions intensify over the country's future leadership. Mojtaba Khamenei, long considered a powerful behind-the-scenes figure in Iran's political and clerical establishment, is now widely believed to be the leading candidate to succeed his father as the country's next Supreme Leader.

Meanwhile, planned funeral ceremonies for the late leader have been thrown into doubt as security concerns escalate. Authorities had initially announced that Ali Khamenei's body would lie in state at a major mosque in Tehran beginning Wednesday evening. However, Iranian state media later confirmed that the farewell ceremony had been postponed amid ongoing military tensions and security threats in the capital.



Mojtaba Khamenei, the influential son of Iran's slain Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, is alive and is increasingly viewed as the most likely successor to his father.

At the same time, Israel and the United States continued their round-the-clock military campaign against Iranian targets on Wednesday. The top U.S. military commander overseeing operations stated that the campaign was ahead of the game plan, suggesting the offensive was progressing faster than anticipated.

The escalating conflict has also shaken global financial markets. Asian markets experienced sharp losses, with a record-breaking crash reported in Seoul as investors reacted to uncertainty in the Middle East. Many traders remained skeptical about assurances from Donald Trump that the world's most critical shipping routes would soon reopen and that blockaded Middle Eastern oil and gas supplies would be released.

Despite the turbulence in Asia, European markets showed signs of recovery after two days of steep declines, fueled by cautious optimism that the conflict might reach a resolution in the near future.

Iranian warship sinks off Sri Lanka coast; 32 rescued

Continued from page 1

Speaking in parliament, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath confirmed that the Iranian vessel had gone down in waters off the island nation. The incident occurred in the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka's southern coast and immediately triggered an emergency response from local authorities.

According to officials, the Sri Lankan navy received a distress signal from the Iranian ship before it sank. Responding swiftly, naval units coordinated with the Sri Lankan Air Force to launch a joint search and rescue operation in the area. The operation managed to save 32 individuals who were on board the vessel at the time of the incident.

The rescued personnel, many of whom were injured, were transported to a state-run hospital in the southern port city of Galle for medical treatment. Hospital authorities are currently monitoring their condition, while rescue teams continue to comb the surrounding waters.

Initial reports from sources within Sri Lanka's navy and defence ministry suggested the warship might have been attacked by a submarine. These sources also indicated that at least 101 people could be missing following the sinking. However, a Sri Lankan navy spokesperson later dismissed the report about the number of missing personnel and declined to confirm any possible cause of the incident.

The spokesperson emphasized that there was currently no verified information about what led to the sinking of the vessel. Authorities have also rejected speculation about a submarine attack, stating that such claims remain unconfirmed.

Sri Lankan defence officials said their immediate priority was to rescue survivors and provide medical assistance to those injured in the incident. Search operations are continuing in the waters where the ship went down, as rescue teams look for any additional survivors or victims.

Officials added that a formal investigation into the cause of the sinking will be launched once rescue operations conclude.

Carney terms US-Israel strikes on Iran a failure of global order

SYDNEY

Addressing an audience at the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Carney said the latest escalation highlights deep flaws in the global system meant to manage conflicts and prevent nuclear proliferation.

His remarks came days after U.S. and Israeli forces launched coordinated strikes against Iran on Saturday following the collapse of negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme.

Carney argued that despite decades of diplomatic efforts, sanctions and oversight by international institutions, the global order has failed to resolve tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions.

He noted that numerous resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council and the monitoring work of the International Atomic Energy Agency had not succeeded in preventing the current crisis.

The current conflict is another example of the failure of the international order, Carney said, referring to the long series of diplomatic frameworks and sanctions imposed on Iran over the years.

The Canadian leader also expressed concern that the United States and Israel had carried out military operations without engaging the United Nations or consulting key allies beforehand. According to Carney, such actions risk undermining international cooperation and weakening established global institutions designed to manage disputes and security threats.

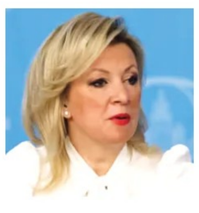
Earlier in his remarks, Carney called for restraint from all sides involved in the conflict. He urged countries engaged in hostilities—including the United States and Israel—to respect international rules governing armed conflict and to work toward de-escalation in the region.

The Middle East crisis has triggered widespread concern among global leaders, with fears growing that the conflict could escalate further and destabilise the wider region.

Carney stressed that diplomatic solutions and adherence to international law remain essential to preventing a broader war and restoring stability.

'France's nuke expansion plan 'highly destabilising'

MOSCOW



Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova described France's decision as an extremely destabilising development. The expansion of France's nuclear capabilities would significantly strengthen the nuclear potential of NATO and could pose a direct threat to Russia in the event of a military confrontation.

She said the plan effectively broadens NATO's nuclear capacity and could allow European allies to coordinate nuclear capabilities against Russia if a conflict were to arise. Moscow has repeatedly warned that the expansion of nuclear capabilities within NATO would escalate tensions and undermine global stability.

President Emmanuel Macron first outlined his vision for strengthening Europe's nuclear deterrence in March 2025, when he proposed launching a strategic dialogue on extending the protection of France's nuclear umbrella to European allies. Many European countries currently rely primarily on the nuclear deterrence provided by the United States under NATO's security framework.

Hezbollah's entry into war sparks rift in Lebanon

HEZABOLLA

Hezbollah's decision to launch rockets and drones toward Israel earlier this week reportedly came as a surprise even to some of the organization's senior officials, highlighting divisions within the group and the broader Lebanese political landscape.

The strikes were carried out on Monday in retaliation for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike.

Israel responded swiftly with retaliatory attacks on targets in Lebanon. The strikes reportedly killed dozens of Lebanese civilians and forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes, deepening fears of another prolonged conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

The latest escalation comes just 15 months after the last major confrontation between Israel and Hezbollah, which caused extensive destruction across Lebanon. That conflict significantly worsened Lebanon's already severe economic crisis, leaving large sections of the population struggling with poverty, infrastructure damage and political instability.

Hezbollah, which was founded in 1982 with the support of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, has long been one of the most influential political and military forces in Lebanon. Over the decades, the group has built a powerful arsenal and military capability that in many respects surpasses that of the Lebanese national army.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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7	3	5	6	9	4	2	1	8
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3	9	6	2	1	7	8	4	5
5	8	2	1	7	9	4	3	6
9	6	3	8	4	2	5	7	1
1	7	4	3	5	6	9	8	2

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

NATO air defence intercepts Iranian missile heading toward Turkey

ANKARA

According to the Turkish Defence Ministry, the missile travelled across the airspace of Syria and Iraq before approaching Turkish territory. NATO's air and missile defence systems stationed in the eastern Mediterranean intercepted and destroyed the projectile before it could enter Turkish airspace.

Officials confirmed that no casualties or injuries were reported following the interception. The ministry said the defence action was carried out to ensure the safety of Turkish territory and to prevent further escalation of the conflict in the region.

In an official release, the Turkish government warned all parties involved in the ongoing conflict to avoid actions that could intensify tensions across the Middle East. The ministry emphasized that Turkey will continue to coordinate closely with NATO and its allies while monitoring developments in the region.

Turkey will take all necessary steps to defend its territory and airspace resolutely and without hesitation, the ministry said in its statement. It also reiterated that the country reserves the right to respond to any hostile actions directed against it. The interception highlights the growing regional impact of the expanding conflict between Iran and its adversaries.

MARTIAL LAW ROW

S.Korean court hears appeal in case against ex-Prez

SEOUL

During the first hearing of the appeal, Yoon appeared in court wearing a dark navy suit, according to reports by Yonhap News Agency.

The proceedings focused on charges related to obstruction of justice and other alleged offenses tied to his controversial attempt to declare martial law in December 2024.

Prosecutors argued that the five-year sentence handed down by a lower court was insufficient given the seriousness of the charges. They reiterated their demand for a harsher punishment, stating that Yoon had shown no remorse for his actions and had not issued any apology to the South Korean public. Prosecutors had originally sought a 10-year prison term for the former president.

Yoon's legal team strongly contested the prosecution's arguments, asserting that the existing sentence already exceeded what they described as his actual level of responsibility. His lawyers also challenged the validity of the arrest warrants issued against him, claiming they were flawed from the beginning. They urged the court to overturn the lower court's verdict and acquit Yoon of all charges.

When given an opportunity to speak by the presiding judge, Yoon reportedly denied any wrongdoing. His defense maintains that the decisions made during the crisis were within the scope of his presidential authority and did not constitute criminal acts.

The appeal comes at a time when the former president is already facing far more serious legal consequences in another case. In a separate ruling earlier this year, a lower court sentenced Yoon to life imprisonment after finding him guilty of leading an insurrection during his brief attempt to impose martial law.

The overlapping cases have triggered intense political debate in South Korea, with supporters arguing that the charges are politically motivated while critics say the legal proceedings demonstrate accountability at the highest levels of government.

Middle East conflict casts shadow as Indian Wells gets underway

Stranded players, canceled events disrupt tennis calendar shift west

INDIAN WELLS

The glittering world of professional tennis has been jolted by the harsh realities of war as the Indian Wells Masters begins under the shadow of escalating conflict in the Middle East.

Several top players were left stranded in Dubai after widespread flight cancellations triggered by missile and drone exchanges involving Iran, Israel and the United States. Among those initially unable to depart were former US Open champion Daniil Medvedev and compatriot Andrey Rublev, who had been competing at the Dubai ATP 500.

At least two tournaments in the United Arab Emirates were canceled after drone strikes near oil refineries forced play to stop. Falling debris from intercepted drones reportedly sparked fires in nearby oil fields, underscoring the proximity of violence to sporting venues.

British player Jack Draper said he managed to leave Dubai on one of the final outbound flights. "I just hope the players and all the staff are able to make it here — or most importantly, that they're safe," he said, reflecting a sentiment shared widely across the locker room.

Meanwhile, tournaments elsewhere continued amid separate security concerns. A major event in Acapulco proceeded despite unrest in Mexico following the killing of a cartel leader, further highlighting the unpredictable environment facing the global tennis circuit.

The ATP said in an earlier statement that the health and safety of players and personnel remained its priority and that it was in direct contact with those affected. Russian media later reported that Medvedev and Rublev had exited the region via Oman.

World number two Jannik Sinner acknowledged the gravity of the situation, saying that while players strive to remain focused, "there are much more important things in life than playing tennis."

As the ATP Masters and WTA 1000 events commence in the California desert, the sport finds itself balancing competition with concern — a reminder that even tennis's global glamour cannot remain untouched by geopolitical turmoil.

Liverpool F.C. stunned late by Wolverhampton Wanderers F.C.

LONDON

Liverpool's troubled season took another damaging turn as Andre's stoppage-time winner handed Wolves a dramatic 2-1 victory at Molineux, marking a rare triumph for the Premier League's bottom side over the reigning champions.

Arne Slot's men appeared poised to escape with a point after Mohamed Salah ended his 11-game league goal drought to cancel out Rodrigo Gomes' late opener. But defensive frailties resurfaced when Andre capitalised on a poor clearance deep into added time, sealing a famous win for Wolves.

The defeat underscored a worrying pattern for Liverpool. They have now conceded 14 goals in the final 15 minutes of second halves this season, including five in the 90th minute or later — the highest tally by any team in a single Premier League campaign. Slot acknowledged the recurring issue, lamenting that recent defeats have consistently arrived in added time.

Wolves had taken the lead in the 78th minute when Gomes latched onto Tolu Arokodare's pass, shrugging off Ibrahima Konate before

Andre's late strike deepens champions' woes in dramatic clash

finishing past Alisson Becker. Salah briefly restored parity, intercepting a loose pass and driving into the area to score. Yet Liverpool's inability to close out matches proved costly once more.

Andre's powerful strike deflected off Joe Gomez and looped beyond Alisson, sparking wild celebrations from Wolves boss Rob Edwards. For Liverpool, the setback dents hopes of securing a Champions League place, with rivals poised to capitalise.

Earlier, Wolves and Liverpool supporters united in applause in memory of former player Diogo Jota, who wore the number 18 shirt at Molineux before his death last year. Elsewhere, Everton boosted their European ambitions with a 2-0 win over Burnley, while Sunderland edged Leeds through a Habib Diarra penalty.

For Liverpool, however, the immediate focus turns to redemption. They return to Molineux in the FA Cup within days, seeking swift revenge after a night that laid bare lingering defensive vulnerabilities.

Premier League: Salah scores but Liverpool stunned by last-place Wolves 2-1

LONDON

Premier League champions Liverpool suffered a shocking 2-1 defeat at the hands of bottom-placed Wolverhampton Wanderers at Molineux Stadium, with Brazilian midfielder Andre netting a stoppage-time winner to leave the Reds reeling.

Liverpool fell behind in the 78th minute when Rodrigo Gomes finished off a clever move past Ibrahima Konaté and Alisson Becker. Mohamed Salah ended his 10-game league goal drought in the 83rd minute, racing onto Wolves' defensive mistake to level the scores and give Liverpool hope.

However, in the fourth minute of added time, Andre's long-range strike deflected off Joe Gomez, wrong-footing Alisson and sending Wolves fans into a frenzy. Wolves manager Rob Edwards described the moment as "amazing" and celebrated wildly, acknowledging the rare joy it brought to a season otherwise heading toward relegation.

Atletico survive Barcelona onslaught to seal dramatic final berth

Atletico Madrid survive scare to reach Copa del Rey final

BARCELONA

Atletico Madrid withstood a fierce assault from FC Barcelona despite a 3-0 second-leg defeat to book their place in the Copa del Rey final with a 4-3 aggregate victory.

Having built a commanding 4-0 advantage in the first leg in February, Diego Simeone's side arrived at Camp Nou braced for a backlash — and they got one. Barcelona, chasing a historic comeback, dominated from the outset and struck through teenage midfielder Marc Bernal, who finished smartly after a driven cross from Lamine Yamal.

The hosts' hopes grew stronger before halftime when Raphinha converted from the penalty spot after Pedri was

fouled, sending goalkeeper Juan Musso the wrong way. Barcelona continued to press relentlessly, with Joao Cancelo and Ferran Torres both going close as Atletico struggled to escape their half.

Bernal's second goal, a crisp volley from Cancelo's cross, set up a nervy finale as Barcelona surged forward in waves. Coach Hansi Flick even deployed defender Ronald Araujo as an emergency striker in the dying minutes, urging his side to "make the impossible possible."

But Atletico, returning to the final for the first time since 2013, held firm through six minutes of stoppage time. Captain Koke praised his team's resilience, saying they knew they would have to "suffer and resist" to protect their aggregate lead.

Simeone insisted his team deserved to progress over the two legs, while also expressing hope that Antoine Griezmann — linked with a move to MLS side Orlando City — would remain at the club for the April 18 final in Seville.

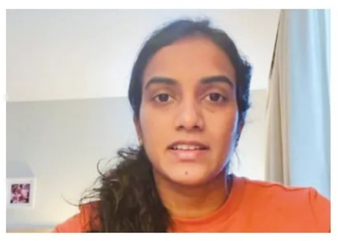
Atletico will face either Real Sociedad or Athletic Bilbao, who meet in the other semi-final. Barcelona, meanwhile, must refocus on their La Liga title charge and upcoming Champions League clash with Newcastle.

'Hope it's the first & last experience': Sindhu recounts Dubai ordeal after reaching home

CHENNAI

Former world champion PV Sindhu described her harrowing ordeal in Dubai after being stranded for three days amid escalating conflict in West Asia, as she arrived safely in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The ace shuttler, en route to the All England Open via Dubai, had to prioritize her and her support staff's safety over competition, eventually withdrawing from the tournament.

In an interaction facilitated by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Sindhu recounted the chaos she faced at the airport when airspace closures left flights canceled and passengers in limbo. "Initially, when they announced that the flight was suspended, we were at the airport. There was no



clarity… finally, they said the airspace is closed. The whole process took a lot of time. Almost all flights got canceled. It was chaos," she said.

Even after reaching a secure location, Sindhu faced constant anxiety from explosions and emergency alerts. "On a daily basis, we were watching the news. I could hear big noises. It was terrifying. Safety was very important," she added.

The 30-year-old double Olympic medallist expressed relief at being safe, while hoping to never face such a situation again. "It was a lot of stress and scary. We try to stay calm as sportspersons, but it was very stressful. I hope it's the first and last experience," she said.

Sindhu confirmed that she explored every option to make it to the All England Open but had no choice but to withdraw. She has communicated her circumstances to the Badminton World Federation, which has acknowledged her situation.

Looking ahead, Sindhu aims to participate in the Swiss Open, beginning March 10, but the ongoing conflict complicates travel plans.

"Flights are full. Everything is via Dubai. I'm trying different options… the war is still going on. Let's hope for the best," she said.

AIFF Disciplinary Committee reduces Mohun Bagan's stadium ban to partial closure

CHENNAI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has revised its earlier sanction on Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG), reducing a full stadium closure to a partial one ahead of the club's Indian Super League (ISL) clash against Odisha FC on March 6. The decision comes after the club filed an appeal against the original ruling.

Initially, MBSG was fined and ordered to host their upcoming match behind closed doors for alleged spectator misconduct during the season opener against Kerala Blasters FC on February 14 at the Vivekananda Yuva Bharati Krirangan. The previous season had also seen repeated incidents, most notably during the 2024-25 match against Bengaluru FC, when fireworks were launched from the home stands into the away section, striking the Bengaluru FC owner and prompting a formal complaint.

The AIFF Disciplinary Committee — an independent body of retired Supreme Court and High Court justices — had sanctioned Mohun Bagan in June 2025 with a stadium closure, which was suspended for one year under Article 35 of the AIFF Disciplinary Code, placing the club on probation. Any further misconduct during this period would automatically activate the ban.

Following multiple instances of pyrotechnics by home supporters in February, MBSG was initially handed a full stadium closure under Article 67 of the AIFF Code and ISL League Rules 7.3.8 and 7.5.4. However, after reviewing the appeal, the AIFF reduced the sanction to a partial closure.

Under the revised order, Mohun Bagan will be allowed to host Odisha FC with access limited to specific sections of the Salt Lake Stadium. The modification aims to balance enforcement of disciplinary measures with allowing law-abiding fans to attend.

The AIFF reiterated that the safety and security of all spectators, players, and officials remain a top priority, while also acknowledging the importance of fans in supporting Indian football.

Rodrygo ruled out of 2026 World Cup ACL tear

MADRID

Brazil international Rodrygo will miss the 2026 World Cup and the remainder of Real Madrid's season after suffering a torn ACL and meniscus in his right knee, the Spanish club confirmed on Tuesday. The 25-year-old winger was injured during Madrid's 1-0 loss to Getafe on Monday, entering as a substitute after nearly a month out with tendinitis.

"This is one of the worst days of my life," Rodrygo wrote on Instagram. "I'm out for the rest of the season with my club and out of the World Cup with my country, a dream that everyone knows how much it means to me. All I can do is be strong as always."

Neither Real Madrid nor the Brazilian Football Confederation revealed whether surgery will be required or offered a timeline for his recovery. The CBF wished him a speedy recovery, acknowledging the major blow to Brazil's preparations just months before the tournament.

Rodrygo featured in all five of Brazil's matches at the 2022 World Cup, where the team was eliminated on penalties by Croatia in the quarterfinals. His spot-kick was saved in the decisive shootout. This season, he made 27 appearances across all competitions for Madrid, contributing three goals and six assists.

His absence represents a significant setback for both club and country as they prepare for crucial domestic and international competitions.

Iran Women's Team Have 'So Much Concern' About Families Amid War

GOLD COAST

Iran's women's football team is battling more than just opponents at the AFC Women's Asian Cup, with players deeply worried about their families amid escalating conflict at home, coach Marziyeh Jafari said Wednesday.

The team is set to face host nation Australia on Thursday after a 3-0 opening loss to South Korea. The players are preparing to compete while Iran endures ongoing military strikes by the United States and Israel, leaving the squad "fully disconnected" from loved ones due to an internet blackout.

Jafari expressed her gratitude for the support of the local Iranian-Australian community. "We are so happy that Iranian-Australians here support us," she said. "Obviously we have so much concern for our families and our loved ones and all other people inside our country, which we are fully disconnected with. Here, we are coming to play football professionally and we will do our best to concentrate on the match ahead."

Striker Sara Didar, 21, spoke emotionally about the situation. "Obviously we're all concerned and we're sad because of what has happened to Iran and our families and our loved ones," she told reporters, fighting back tears.

Asian football authorities have pledged "full support and assistance" to the team, which arrived in Australia just days before the strikes that killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior officials. The squad's mental strain is compounded by the historic significance of their participation; Iran made its women's Asian Cup debut in India in 2022, earning widespread acclaim in a country where women's sports face significant restrictions.

Despite the anxiety weighing on the players, Jafari emphasized their professionalism and determination to focus on the tournament. "We are here to compete, and we will do our best on the pitch," she said, underscoring the team's resilience in the face of extraordinary circumstances.

The Iranian women's team now faces the dual challenge of performing on the continental stage while worrying about their families' safety amid one of the most turbulent periods in the nation's recent history.

QUICK READ

India market weakness a buying opportunity, earnings revival ahead

Mumbai

Indian stock markets may look weak on the surface, but the current phase offers a strong buying opportunity for long-term investors, a report said on Wednesday. The global brokerage Morgan Stanley believed that structural fundamentals of the Indian economy remain intact and earnings growth is set to improve further in 2026, even as markets struggle with near-term volatility. The report said Indian equities are reacting more sharply to negative news than to positive developments, creating doubts among investors about possible structural problems.

Stronger risk–reward balance in markets as India's growth cycle gains

New Delhi

Longer tenor government securities are looking attractive with much of the uncertainty already priced in, and the risk–reward balance in Indian markets is better due to strong domestic growth, a report said on Wednesday. The report from Bajaj Finserv AMC said domestic growth traction, supportive policy changes and improved global exposure through trade agreements have led to the risk–reward balance appearing meaningfully better. Though the asset management firm favored long tenor G-secs it said that yields may remain range bound in the short term given huge supply.

West Asia crisis: No relief in sight: Sensex, Nifty crash again

Mumbai

India's equity market nosedived on Wednesday with the benchmark indices BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty50 crashing more than 2% each. The selling in global equities, including India, has picked up pace amid increased chances of a prolonged full-blown war in West Asia, as the US-Israel coalition and Iran continue to exchange missiles, and its impact on oil prices which have risen sharply in recent sessions. The Sensex crashed up to 1,800 points, or 2.2%, in the early hours of Wednesday, to an intraday low of 78,443.20, while the Nifty 50 plunged over 550 points, or 2.3%, to the day's low of 24,305.40. At close on Wednesday, the Sensex was down 1,122.66 points (1.40%) to 79,116.19, while the Nifty declined 385.20 points (1.55%) to 24,480.50. The benchmarks have fallen about 4% each in the past three seasons. This market downturn echoed global trends, with Japan's Nikkei 225 and South Korea's Kospi suffering the steepest declines. Meanwhile, the rupee tumbled to a new low of 92.30 against the US dollar, weighed down by surging crude and persistent geopolitical risks

India-Japan eye collab to explore rare earth deposits in Rajasthan

Japan and India are in discussions to jointly explore newly-discovered rare earth mineral deposits in the desert state of Rajasthan.

TOKYO

According to reports, the discussions come after India recently identified three hard rock rare earth deposits located in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The deposits are estimated to contain around 1.29 million metric tons of rare earth oxides, a discovery that could significantly strengthen India's mineral security.

The announcement about the discovery was made last month by Union Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy. He said the newly identified reserves could play a major role in boosting India's domestic supply of critical minerals that are vital for modern technologies

and strategic industries.

The discussions between New Delhi and Tokyo are reportedly part of a preliminary agreement on critical minerals cooperation signed between the two countries last year. Under the proposed arrangement, Japan is expected to send a team of experts to Rajasthan to conduct detailed studies of the deposits and assess the feasibility of mining operations.

Japan is also likely to contribute advanced extraction technologies as well as financial support to help develop the reserves. In return, the Japanese government is expected to seek a stable and long-term supply of rare earth materials from India.

Hard rock rare earth deposits require complex and specialised extraction techniques, which India currently lacks at a large commercial scale. Experts believe Japan's technological expertise in mineral processing could play a key role in making the project viable.

Japan has been actively exploring mining projects across the world as part of a broader strategy to diversify its supply chains for critical minerals. Rare earth elements are essential for manufacturing permanent magnets used in technologies such as electric vehicle motors, wind turbines, fighter jets and drones.

While discussions between the two governments are ongoing, reports indicate that no specific agreements have yet been reached regarding corporate partnerships or technology-sharing arrangements related to the Rajasthan project. Nonetheless, the potential collaboration highlights the growing strategic importance of rare earth resources in global technology and defence industries.

India's chemical sector set to touch $1 trillion turnover by 2040: Nadda

NEW DELHI

Addressing the webinar, Nadda said the global pharmaceutical landscape is rapidly shifting toward biologics, with an estimated 40 percent of medicines worldwide expected to be biologics by 2035.

He pointed out that nearly $300 billion worth of drug patents are set to expire by 2030, creating a major opportunity for India to expand its presence in the biosimilars market.

To capitalize on this opportunity, the government has launched the BioPharma Mission, under which a budget of Rs 10,000 crore has been allocated for the next five years. According to the minister, even a 1 percent share of the global biosimilars market could generate an annual opportunity worth around Rs 2 lakh crore for India.

Nadda also stressed the need to strengthen key institutions such as National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) by integrating them more closely with talent development and skill-building initiatives. This, he said, would help create a strong ecosystem for research and innovation in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors.

To further boost research capacity, the government plans to develop around 1,000 clinical trial sites across the country. The expansion of clinical research infrastructure is expected to accelerate innovation and attract global investments in India's pharmaceutical sector.

The minister also highlighted the role of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), stating that the regulatory body will be strengthened to ensure faster approvals for biosimilars and fermentation-based drugs.

India's share in the global chemical industry is expected to rise to 5–6 percent by 2030, with the sector projected to achieve a turnover of $1 trillion by 2040, Union Minister JP Nadda said during a post-Budget webinar.

Currently, India's chemical sector has an output worth approximately Rs 19.4 lakh crore and is particularly strong in segments such as dyes and agrochemicals. However, the country's global market share in the sector remains at around 3 percent.

To address infrastructure gaps, the government has allocated Rs 3,300 crore for the development of three world-class chemical parks equipped with plug-and-play utilities, advanced effluent treatment systems, integrated logistics facilities and built-in safety mechanisms.

Nadda said the broader budgetary allocation of Rs 13,000 crore for the Bio-Pharma SHAKTI initiative and the development of chemical parks represents a strategic investment aimed at strengthening India's long-term industrial and pharmaceutical capabilities.

Safe-haven assets likely to rally as Middle East tension deepens

NEW DELHI

Safe haven currencies, from the dollar to the yen and gold, are expected to rally and equity sentiment could worsen due to supply chain disruption amid escalation of the US-Iran war, a report said on Wednesday. The report from DBS Bank said spreads of sovereign and corporate bonds could widen as investors while the monetary policy will stay put in the near term.

Taimur Baig, Chief Economist, DBS Bank, warned that despite the Iranian Navy's warships posing minimal threat, the country's ability to deploy mines and asymmetric attacks in the Strait of Hormuz could slow shipments, raise insurance, shipping costs and energy prices.

With Kurds in the north and Baluchis in the south, regime change may coincide with wars of cessation, dragging in several countries in the region, from Turkey to Iraq, Baig said.

A prolonged closure of Hormuz will cause huge disruption to the global oil trade given that even the spare oil capacity from gulf producers has to pass through this strait, the bank said.

In the event of a full-fledged crisis, the strategic stocks in the US will also be insufficient to offset the damage, it said.

The bank forecasted that crude could hit $100–150 per barrel, in an extreme scenario of a full blockage of the Strait, raising inflation expectations, limiting the room for the Fed to cut rates and raising the risk of a global recession. Hou Wey Fook, Chief Investment Officer.

India plans 58 repatriation flights as Gulf airspace remains closed

MUMBAI

According to the ministry, the special operations include 30 flights by IndiGo and 23 flights by Air India and Air India Express.

The government said these flights are part of coordinated efforts to assist passengers stranded due to widespread airspace restrictions across the Middle East.

In addition to Indian airlines, several foreign carriers operating between India and Gulf countries are also running limited services, subject to operational feasibility and available airspace corridors. Aviation authorities noted that airlines have made calibrated adjustments to flight schedules while gradually resuming long-haul and ultra-long-haul operations through alternative routes that bypass restricted airspace zones.

Apart from Air India and IndiGo, other Indian airlines such as SpiceJet and Akasa Air are also operating special flights from Gulf cities including Dubai and Fujairah. These flights are scheduled to arrive at major Indian airports such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Authorities have advised passengers not to travel to Dubai International Airport or Al Maktoum International Airport unless they have received direct confirmation from their airline regarding departure times.

Currently, Dubai's airspace is only partially open, with a limited number of commercial flights being allowed. Airlines such as Emirates and IndiGo are operating select flights while providing regular updates to passengers through their official websites.

Meanwhile, Etihad Airways announced that most scheduled flights from Abu Dhabi remain cancelled. The airline said operations would remain suspended until 2 pm local time on March 5, although some repositioning, cargo and repatriation flights may operate in coordination with UAE authorities.

The Civil Aviation Ministry emphasised that passenger safety remains the top priority and advised airlines to maintain clear communication with travellers. Carriers have also been directed to comply with regulatory norms related to refunds, rescheduling and passenger assistance.

Officials said the ministry remains in constant contact with airlines and aviation authorities and is closely monitoring the situation as developments in the Middle East continue to affect global air travel.

India–Sri Lanka ties mooted to develop northern province

NEW DELHI

The report recommends establishing a Northern Single-Window Authority to streamline administrative procedures and accelerate investments in the region. The proposed body would have powers to grant licences, work permits and environmental clearances within 30 days, creating a faster and more investor-friendly regulatory system.

In addition, the report suggests introducing preferential visas lasting between five and ten years for Indian technology professionals. Such a move is expected to attract talent from India's rapidly growing technology sector and support the development of digital industries in the Northern Province.

To further facilitate trade, the report proposes formalising the use of the Indian Rupee for direct trade settlements within Northern Provincial Economic Zones. Using the rupee for transactions could help reduce exchange-rate volatility for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operating between the two countries.

According to the report, the initiative aims to replicate the high-growth, industry-driven development models seen in southern Indian states. By leveraging India's financial resources and market access, the Northern Province could emerge as a long-term economic bridge connecting the two countries.

The report also stresses the strategic advantage of the region's proximity to India's trillion-dollar southern economy. It recommends building specialised maritime and digital infrastructure that would allow Sri Lanka's north to integrate more closely into global value chains.

To encourage investment, the report calls for significant tax incentives, including 10-year corporate income tax holidays and full exemptions from Customs Import Duty (CID), Value Added Tax (VAT), and the Ports and Airports Development Levy (PAL) on machinery and construction materials imported during the project implementation phase.

It also proposes establishing specialised Export Processing Zones in key northern cities such as Jaffna and Mannar. These zones could be integrated with the industrial supply chains of major Indian cities like Chennai and Coimbatore.

EU-India FTA comes as strategic hedge amid new world order

NEW DELHI

The successful conclusion of the negotiations on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) comes against the backdrop of the dramatic shift in the global strategic environment, which led to a stepping up of efforts by the two sides to recalibrate the bilateral economic partnership, according to an article published by the European Policy Centre (EPC).

The EU has recently pushed to diversify its trade partnerships with unprecedented determination. In Brussels, policymakers have grown increasingly wary of China's state-led economic practices while simultaneously grappling with a more aggressive and often unpredictable shift in US trade policy. This, together with the wider fragmentation of global economic governance, has reinforced the EU's resolve to reduce strategic dependencies and broaden its network of economic partners, the article written by Almut Maller and Ivano di Carlo stated.

Amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine and an increasingly assertive pursuit of national interests by Washington and Beijing, the EU fears for the future of open markets and the rules-based international order on which the bloc's prosperity depends. In this context, the new FTA with India represents an additional building block of this diversification agenda, the article pointed out.

According to the article, the FTA also provides India a strategic hedge against the economic pressure mounted by the Donald Trump administration over the country's imports of cheap oil from Russia.

IT points out that political leaders of the EU and India chose to give their renewed trade commitment prominent public visibility, describing it as the mother of all deals. The European leaders also attended India's high-profile Republic Day celebrations to drive home the point.

Beyond the positive impact that economists assess for trade between the EU and India under the agreement, both sides were keen to present their new alliance as a timely move by two of the world's largest democratic economies to re-strengthen credible and reliable trade frameworks, with the ambition of generating impact well beyond their bilateral relationship, the article stated.

For the EU, the political stakes are particularly high. Brussels must demonstrate the extent to which its new trade strategy can face the challenge posed by the US under the presidency of Donald Trump, the article added.

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

South Korean markets in freefall

SEOUL

Seoul shares plunged more than 12 per cent on Wednesday, closing below the 5,100-point mark, as mounting concerns over the economic fallout from the escalating Middle East conflict rattled investor sentiment.

The Korean won also fell sharply against the US dollar. The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) tumbled 698.37 points, or 12.06 per cent, to close at 5,093.54, extending losses from a 7.24 per cent drop in the previous session.

The 12.06 per cent fall marked the steepest one-day decline since Sept. 12, 2001, in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Trade volume was heavy at 1.6 billion shares worth 62.6 trillion won ($42.5 billion). Losers sharply outnumbered winners 908 to 12.

The Korea Exchange (KRX) triggered circuit breakers shortly after the KOSPI fell more than 8 per cent amid heightened geopolitical tensions.

Earlier in the session, the KRX activated a five-minute sell-side sidecar immediately after the opening bell, temporarily halting program-driven sell orders in KOSPI futures. A similar sidecar was also issued on the tech-heavy KOSDAQ market.

The US and Israel carried out coordinated strikes on Iran over the weekend, killing Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. U.S. President Donald Trump signaled the possibility of a prolonged military campaign.

Overnight, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.83 per cent, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite lost 1.02 per cent.

Institutions sold a net 579.4 billion won worth of stocks, offsetting foreigners and individuals' stock purchases of 228.78 billion won and 72.9 billion won, respectively. Institutional investors remained net sellers for a second straight session amid escalating Middle East tensions, dragging the index below the 6,000-point mark, Kang Jin-hyeok, an analyst at Shinhan Securities Co., said.

ICC Men's T20 WC 2026 sets new viewership benchmark worldwide

Digital surge and high-stakes clashes fuel record-breaking cricket viewership

NEW DELHI

The ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 has scripted history by registering the highest-ever viewership in the tournament's history, crossing the 500 million mark in India alone. ICC Chairman Jay Shah said he was "humbled" by the overwhelming response from fans as the event shattered previous broadcasting records.

Calling it the most global and accessible edition of the tournament, Shah noted that the ICC had set out with a clear ambition to expand cricket's reach and deepen fan engagement through both television and digital platforms. That vision appears to have translated into unprecedented numbers, driven by high-intensity league matches and surging digital consumption.

In a post on X, Shah said viewership in India had crossed 500 million — the highest ever for any T20 World Cup. He also highlighted the remarkable digital milestone achieved on JioHotstar, where concurrent viewership peaked at 60.5 million during key matches, underlining the growing dominance of streaming platforms in cricket broadcasting. With the knockout stage beginning tonight, including the two semifinals and the final, ICC officials expect the numbers to climb even higher. The tournament has already surpassed the viewership figures recorded during the previous edition held in the Americas in 2024. The strong performance follows the massive success of the 2025 Champions Trophy, which set benchmarks with 250 billion minutes of cumulative watch-time and a peak television viewership of 122 million. Jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka, the tournament commenced on February 7 and will conclude with the final on March 8. With record-breaking engagement across formats and platforms, the 2026 edition has reaffirmed cricket's unmatched popularity in the subcontinent and its expanding global footprint.

From spectators to aspirants: J&K's Ranji triumph ignites India dreams

SRINAGAR

For decades, cricket in Jammu and Kashmir meant fandom — television screens glowing in modest homes, children imitating their heroes in cramped alleys, and the India cap existing only in posters and daydreams. That distance has now narrowed dramatically.

Jammu and Kashmir's historic victory in the Ranji Trophy has transformed not just the state's cricketing record books but the aspirations of an entire generation. By defeating Karnataka cricket team and sealing the title with a commanding 291-run first-innings lead in Hubballi on February 28, J&K announced its arrival on Indian cricket's biggest domestic stage. The triumph travelled far beyond the boundary ropes. It echoed across school grounds in Sopore, orchards in Shopian and practice nets in downtown Srinagar. The message was unmistakable: Kashmiri cricketers are no longer mere admirers of Indian cricket — they can shape its future.

Spinner Sahil Lotra described the victory as "a very special moment" and the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream built on preparation and belief.

Fast bowler Auqib Nabi, among the season's leading wicket-takers, underlined that the goal was never symbolic participation but proving J&K could outplay established giants. They did exactly that.

Former India all-rounder Parvez Rasool, once a lone emblem of Kashmiri representation in national cricket, called the win a proud and emotional milestone.

This time, however, it signals a system producing contenders — not isolated breakthroughs.

Coaches across Srinagar report rising enrolments in academies. Parents increasingly discuss structured training, nutrition plans and trial pathways.

Teenagers who once memorised international statistics now track domestic scorecards with equal intensity.

In a region often defined by conflict narratives, sport is scripting a different story — one of access, integration and opportunity. The Ranji triumph has reinforced the belief that national platforms are open to talent from every corner of India.

India, England chase perfection in familiar semifinal duel

MUMBAI

India and England renew their fierce T20 rivalry on Thursday as the two heavyweights clash in yet another semifinal of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at the iconic Wankhede Stadium.

Overwhelming favourites at the start of the tournament, India have not quite pieced together a flawless campaign. A heavy defeat to South Africa in the Super 8 stage forced a tactical reset, prompting the inclusion of Sanju Samson to break the left-heavy top order. The move paid rich dividends as Samson struck a career-defining 97 not out against the West Indies in a virtual quarterfinal, finally delivering on the big stage more than a decade after his international debut.

While Samson's resurgence has steadied the side, Abhishek Sharma now finds himself searching for rhythm. Once in red-hot form leading into the tournament, the southpaw has struggled for consistency despite a fifty against Zimbabwe.

England's pace spearhead Jofra Archer is expected to test Samson with sharp short balls, while Will Jacks and Adil Rashid pose a significant spin threat in the middle overs.

Captain Suryakumar Yadav led an intense training session, alongside Mumbai Indians teammates Tilak Varma and Hardik Pandya, as India fine-tuned plans against a versatile English attack. Jasprit Bumrah has been exceptional, though India will seek tighter execution in the death overs.

The spin duo of Axar Patel and Varun Chakaravarthy must adapt swiftly on a surface previously known to assist slower bowlers.

England, led by Harry Brook, have relied on individual brilliance from Brook and Jacks, with Sam Curran providing balance. Questions linger over Jos Buttler's form, but the white-ball stalwart remains capable of turning big games.

This marks the third successive T20 World Cup semifinal meeting between the sides — England triumphed in 2022, India responded in 2024. With no secrets left between familiar foes, both teams know that Thursday offers the perfect stage to finally deliver a complete performance.

INDIA, ENGLAND RENEW FIERCE T20 WORLD CUP RIVALRY

India face England in a high-pressure semifinal at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Mumbai. India reshuffled their batting after a Super 8 loss to South Africa, bringing in Sanju Samson, who responded with an unbeaten 97 against West Indies. However, Abhishek Sharma's form remains a concern. England captain Harry Brook has led from the front, supported by Will Jacks and Sam Curran, while Jos Buttler seeks a return to runs.

ARAVINDH STUNS WORLD CHAMPION GUKESH AT PRAGUE CHESS FESTIVAL

PRAGUE

Defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram delivered a clinical performance to defeat reigning world champion D. Gukesh in the sixth round of the Masters section at the Prague International Chess Festival, pushing his compatriot to the bottom of the standings.

Aravindh's victory not only reshaped the leaderboard but also impacted the live ratings, with Gukesh slipping to world number 20. The live list notably does not feature Viswanathan Anand, reportedly due to inactivity. Since clinching the world title in December 2024, Gukesh has struggled to maintain momentum, with the Tata Steel Masters in January 2025 — where he lost the tiebreak to R. Praggnanandhaa after tying for first — being a rare bright spot. Aravindh switched to the Sicilian Defence after earlier experiments with the Philidor backfired in previous rounds. Gukesh opted for complications, sacrificing a pawn in the middlegame to generate tactical chances. As the position evolved into rook versus two knights, a draw appeared likely. However, under severe time pressure on move 40, Gukesh committed a decisive error, and the game concluded eight moves later. It was the only decisive result of the day in the Masters section. Dutch Grandmaster Jorden van Foreest maintained his sole lead on 4.5 points after drawing with local favourite David Navara. Nodirbek Abdusattorov remains half a point behind, keeping the title race alive with three rounds remaining.

Aravindh now moves into the chasing pack alongside Vincent Keymer and Nodirbek Yakubboev, while Hans Niemann sits just above Gukesh in the standings.

WTA split over proposal for five-set women's matches at Slams

INDIAN WELLS

Leading players on the WTA Tour are divided over a proposal to introduce best-of-five-set matches for women from the quarterfinal stage onward at Grand Slam tournaments, a concept backed by newly appointed USTA CEO Craig Tiley.

Currently, women compete in best-of-three matches at all majors, while men contest five-setters. Tiley, long associated with innovation during his tenure as head of the Australian Open, has argued that fan engagement data shows interest intensifies as matches extend deeper. However, six-time major champion Iga Swiatek questioned the logic behind lengthening matches in an era dominated by shrinking attention spans. "It's a weird approach in the world where everything is becoming faster," Swiatek said during media interactions at Indian Wells. She also raised concerns about a potential drop in quality as fatigue sets in. "I don't know if we would be able to keep the quality for five sets. Men are more physically strong and they can handle it better," she added, noting that players would need to overhaul training schedules and tournament calendars to adapt.

Reigning Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina echoed those reservations, describing the mental challenge of switching formats mid-tournament as "not easy" and admitting she would prefer to stick to best-of-three.

Others see competitive advantages. Coco Gauff acknowledged that longer matches might suit her physical strengths but opposed altering the format only from the quarterfinals onward, arguing it could disrupt competitive balance. World number one Aryna Sabalenka, meanwhile, threw her full support behind the proposal. "Yeah, let's do that," she said confidently, suggesting her physical resilience could translate into even greater Grand Slam success.

Magnus Carlsen's chess secrets: Puzzles, pressure and the power of intuition

NEW DELHI

To many, Magnus Carlsen appears less a man and more a machine — a relentless force who grinds down elite Grandmasters with icy precision. Yet beneath his peak 2882 Elo rating lies a fiercely human competitor who has wrestled with doubt, boredom and even puzzles that refused to yield.

In interviews over the years, Carlsen has spoken candidly about the limits of calculation. One formative challenge was the classic eight queens puzzle. Solving the basic configuration was easy; discovering all 92 possible patterns was not. He has recalled spending weeks after school exhaustively working through every variation. The episode revealed not just brilliance, but patience — mastery forged through stubborn persistence rather than flashes of genius. If one "problem" unsettles Carlsen more than any composed study, it is the modern chess engine. He has admitted avoiding regular battles with top programs like Stockfish because their near-perfect calculations can feel creatively stifling. For Carlsen, chess is not about surviving 30 flawless computer moves but about navigating positions that retain human tension and ambiguity. That philosophy defines his approach. Contrary to the myth that Grandmasters calculate endlessly deep lines, Carlsen often trusts instinct first. He has described chess as a language: moves "sound" right or wrong long before calculation confirms them. Thinking time, he suggests, is largely about verification.

His competitive fire is equally revealing. Carlsen has never pretended to handle defeat gracefully. He prefers to channel frustration into sharper focus, a mindset reminiscent of elite athletes across sports. After setbacks — including difficult stretches in world championship matches — he has leaned on instinct rather than retreating into caution. Carlsen's scepticism extends to traditional tactics puzzles. In his view, many are artificial exercises that announce the presence of a solution. Real games demand something subtler: recognising that an opportunity exists at all.

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